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Nick Carter Stories



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THE SECRET ORDER OF
ASSOCIATED CROOKS

OR—
The Confederated
Criminal Trust *

NICK CARTER STORIES

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No. 54.

NEW YORK, September 20, 1913.

Price Five Cents.

The Secret Order of Associated Crooks;

Or, THE CONFEDERATED CRIMINAL TRUST.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

JOE GRIMM,

OLD BOOKS BOUGHT, SOLD AND EXCHANGED.

385 Michigan St., Buffalo, N. Y.

CHAPTER I.

KNOCKED OUT IN ONE ROUND.

"It's Pommery Sec."

"Well, what of it?"

"Ah! g'wan, Pete. You're dead slow."

"Well, s'posen I am—what of it? S'posen it is Pommery—what of it?"

"Ain't you heard?"

"Heard what?"

"What Pommery's doin' since he got back from his trip around the world?"

"No."

"Well, it ain't a sure thing, but all the same it's said that he's rubberin' for Nick Carter."

"Gee!" said Pete Morgan, with a leer in his eyes. Then he stuck his tongue in his cheek and grinned, while he added:

"Wouldn't that jar you?"

"More'n likely enough it's true," said Chris Connors.

"Never on your doornote. Tain't in the register, Chris. Do you s'pose he'd be hanging around doin' the same old odd jobs he used to do if he was workin' for Carter? Do you s'pose he'd be holdin' horses, smashin' baggage, runnin' errands, blackin' boots, sellin' papers, and monkeyin' for pennies and nickels if he was workin' for Nick Carter?"

"Say, Chris, I've had a lot of thoughts about Phil Pommery since I've knowed him, but I never did size him up for a natural-born idiot."

"Sh-h-h! Here he comes," warned Chris. "I'll jest stroll away and let you talk to him. Maybe you kin get something out of him. I tried it yesterday and couldn't get a raise."

Philip Pommery, or Pommery Sec, or Fiz, as he was

familiarly known among the boys with whom he had consorted ever since he could remember, crossed the street slowly, toward the spot where Pete and Chris were standing, and he permitted himself to smile when he saw that they had discovered his approach, and had separated as he drew near to them.

He pretended that he had not seen Pete, who was waiting for him, and he was in the act of passing when his name was called.

"I say, Fiz, where you going?" said Pete, as Phil was in the act of passing him.

"Nowhere. Want to fall in, Pete?"

"Smart, ain't you? Eh?"

"Sure. Why don't you try to be? Maybe you couldn't; but you could try."

"Say, Fiz, is that true what I heard about you?"

"Maybe. What was it?"

"Heard you was workin' for Carter."

"Who?"

"Carter."

"Who's he?"

"Nick Carter, the detective. Are you?"

"Sure."

"Honest Injun, now, are you workin' for Nick Carter, Fiz?"

"Yep. I'm his private secretary. Office hours, two to four a. m. Come up and see me some time when time hangs heavy on your hands."

"No jokin', Fiz; are you?"

For answer Phil stuck his thumbs under his arms, threw back his head, and strutted up and down the curb in front of his companion. His tongue was in his cheek and his eyes were sparkling with mischief, and altogether he looked what he was—the ideal personification of an independent street arab of New York.

He wore a leather cap which was at least two sizes too small for him, and that was set at a jaunty angle on the side of his head, and as his thick, dark hair had grown rather long, it gave him somewhat of the look of a painting that was famous a few years ago, and was called the Neapolitan Boy.

"Sure, I'm working for Nick Carter," repeated Philip, realizing that a denial would do him no good, and that the only safe course for the misleading of the ideas of Pete consisted in guying him. "Want to hear all about it?"

"Yes."

"Well, it was this way: When I was in Russia, I was calling on the czar one day when who should walk in an' stick his feet against the edge of the mantel but Nick Carter; and says he to me, says he—"

Pete's eyes began to glitter dangerously. He was a very much larger boy than Pommery—bigger and stronger and older. He knew that the boy was guying him, and he didn't like it, and so, suddenly, without the slightest warning to his companion, he raised one hand and struck him a resounding slap with the flat of it, across the cheek.

The force of the blow turned Philip half around, and it brought tears of pain and rage to his eyes.

Doubtless Pete supposed that the slap would be all that would be required to silence Phil and to teach him that he must not guy his superiors, but in that he was very much mistaken.

No sooner had the blow landed on the boy's cheek than he turned and leaped upon his assailant, and he did it so quickly that Pete was in a measure taken by surprise—and the onslaught was so sudden that the larger boy was borne to the pavement.

Philip's fists lost no time after that.

Biff-biff-bang-bang-bang! they fell, beating a sort of devil's tattoo upon Pete's face and nose.

The set-to happened almost directly in front of the World Building, where narrow Frankfort Street is turned into a newsboys' thoroughfare at certain hours of the day and night, and it was at an hour when the neighborhood was rather crowded.

In an instant a crowd had gathered around the combatants, forming a ring that was dozens deep on every side, and everybody struggling to get nearer so that they could get a better view of the fight.

When Philip had punched Pete a score or so of times, he hesitated, and then, with a little contemptuous smile in his eyes, he leaped to his feet and away from his enemy, and would have dodged away and disappeared if the crowd had permitted it; but no. He was held where he was, and in another instant Pete was on his feet as full of fight as ever.

Naturally, he supposed he would have an easy victory over the smaller boy, now that he was on his feet again, but when he squared off and swung his arms, something after the manner of a windmill, Philip, who had discovered that he could not escape, and had therefore turned to face his enemy, cleverly dodged inside the other's guard, and planted two quick punches, one with his left and the other with his right, the first on Pete's ear and the second on the point of his jaw.

The blows fell like small trip hammers, and Pete fell like a beef.

The wallop on his jaw was altogether too much for him, and he felt as if the earth and the sky had some-

how suddenly come together with his head crushed to a pulp between them.

When he struck the pavement, too, his head struck first, and he thought it was night and that the world had suddenly become filled with shooting stars—and it all seemed so funny and so unusual that he thought he'd rest there where he was and think it over.

The crowd simply yelled in its delight. Then, as if by common consent, it opened a passage for Pommery to pass through, and one man patted him on the back as he passed and squeezed a dollar into his hand, while he whispered:

"You're a dandy crackajack, kid. Come over to the Australian A. C., in Williamsburg, when you want to talk business. I'll give you a job that'll pay you better than fighting sweeps like that big duffer."

Pommery thanked the man and continued on his way; and then, when he had got clear of the crowd, it occurred to him that some of the fellows might think he was running away, and he stopped and waited.

The crowd melted away, and through it Pommery saw Pete struggle to his feet, wipe the blood from his nose, and feel of his jaw to see if it was still fast to him; and then he saw him do another, and a rather strange thing, under the circumstances.

Pete, having ascertained that the top of his head had not taken wings and flown away, put his fingers to his lips and sounded a shrill, peculiar whistle, and this he repeated three times.

Just as Phil was wondering what he had done that for, he heard an answering whistle from farther down Frankfort Street, and then another from behind him, along Park Row, and after that there were several others, five or six, he thought, from different sections of the street around him.

"That sounds mighty like a signal," said Philip to himself. "Pete's calling his friends. I wonder if he thinks he needs the whole population of Park Row to help him lick a little feller like me? Sounds like it. Well, I reckon I'll move along or the first thing I know little Phillie boy will be getting it in the neck."

He moved up the street as far as the drug store on the corner, and then, perceiving that the window afforded rather a good mirror, he stopped and focused his eyes upon the changing reflection.

He could see Pete on the corner, and as he discovered him, he saw that two other boys—strangers to him they were, too—approached his late adversary, and that the three whispered rapidly together, while Pete pointed openly in his direction.

"Blowed if he ain't setting his dogs on me, or something mighty like it," muttered the lad. Then he turned, placed his back to the window, thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and fixed his eyes squarely upon the trio at the corner.

"Wouldn't wonder if I could do the whole bunch if they get me riled enough!" muttered the lad.

Then, with a scornful toss of his head, which he knew that Pete saw, he wheeled and went toward the bridge, not deigning to turn his head and look behind him again.

It would have been better had Pommery done so, for no sooner was his back turned, than three other boys joined the three who were already together, and a moment later they separated, and if Philip had been looking, he would have seen that each one of the six was watching

him as they moved away, and that four of them darted ahead so that they might, in effect, surround him.

Pommery was to learn presently, and all too soon, what those maneuvers meant, for they portended an unusual and a thrilling experience for Nick Carter's youngest assistant.

CHAPTER II.

ASSAULTED IN THE DARK.

Philip Pommery continued on his way up Park Row until he arrived at the corner of New Chambers Street. There he turned into William, and, having threaded his way through the labyrinth of trucks and horses which seem to be perpetually loading and unloading along that thoroughfare, he reached the point that is directly underneath the Brooklyn Bridge. There he turned eastward along the path that is directly under the bridge, for he had an errand in Pearl Street, and the way he chose was the shortest cut to his destination.

But Pommery Sec was destined not to perform his errand that day.

He was halfway down the street toward Gold Street, when, as if by magic, almost a score of boys seemed suddenly to materialize out of the empty air and to rush down upon him.

Before he even realized that he was attacked, he was seized from behind and his arms pinioned so that he could do nothing to defend himself.

Then, while they held him so that he could not move, the boys gathered closer around him and all began to move, as if upon a prearranged plan, down the street in the direction of the East River.

It was, without doubt, a genuine case of abduction, taking place in a public and frequented thoroughfare of New York City, under the eyes of every passer-by, and yet totally unseen and unnoticed.

Who pays attention to what a lot of boys are doing at such times, and in such places? Nobody. Their acts are attributed to mischief, even though in fact there may be villainy afoot.

If there were men along the street at that time who saw the crowd of a dozen or more boys hustling another down the street, they devoted no more than a glance to the incident, and straightway forgot it.

Pommery knew, the moment he was seized, that there was something deeper afoot than he had calculated upon.

He recalled the signal whistling between his enemies, after he had thrashed Pete Morgan, and he realized that he understood now what that signaling had portended.

Nevertheless, he disdained to cry out for help. He doubted if it would come to him even if he did so. He was aware of the view usually taken of the escapades of boys in the street by men who were passing, and he sized up the situation with the mental remark:

"If this is my medicine, I'll swallow it without a single yap."

The one thing that surprised Pommery when he had time to think things over, and to a certain extent to observe his captors, was that, Pete Morgan was not among them, a fact that was even more surprising still, was that there was not one among the fellows who had captured him whom he knew, even by sight.

They were none of them boys who belonged around the region of the entrance to Brooklyn Bridge and the

city hall—and he noticed also that they were older than the average age of the boys he knew best.

However, they did not give him much chance to observe them, for they hustled him along with considerable haste.

Once he protested.

"What are you fellows up to?" he demanded. "What's your game?"

"You'll find out—when you find out," was the retort. "Keep yer mouth shut, now. We don't want any guff from you, sonny."

"Well, I'm not going to stand very much of this sort of thing," insisted Pommery.

"I told you to shut yer jaw," retorted the boy who had spoken before. "If you don't want it smashed in for you, you had better take my advice, and take it mighty quick, too."

"Well, I want to know where you are taking me," insisted Pommery.

The reply this time was a savage blow against Pommery's cheek, delivered, with force sufficient to knock his head to one side.

"You're a lot of duffers and cowards, that's what you are," said Philip angrily. "If you'll let me loose I'll fight any two of you—"

A second blow on the other side of his head convinced him of the wisdom of silence, and he said no more, while his captors continued to walk him toward the river in grim stillness.

When they were almost at the river's edge, they halted, and the boy who had done the talking before, stepped in front, and, facing him, said:

"Pommery, you're up against it, and you're up against it hard, don't forget that."

"Oh, am I?" asked Philip.

"Shut up. Don't try to be smart, and don't try to do any talking. Listen. That's all you got to do."

"Well, I'm listening."

"You're up against it hard."

"You said that before. I heard you."

"It's up to you if you pan out all right and don't get hurt. If you do get hurt it'll be your own fault."

"It'll be my fault that somebody else gets hurt, if you let me loose for a minute."

"Drop it, Pommery. I ain't fooling. I'm in dead earnest. All you've got to do at the present moment is to listen to what I've got to say."

"If you utter another word before I give you permission to speak," the boy continued menacingly, "you'll get a tap on the head with this," and he held up for Philip's inspection, a section of insulated cable—a most dangerous weapon, which will knock a man senseless and leave no mark of the blow behind it.

"We ain't fooling with you, Pommery. You'll find that out before we get through with you, and you may as well take it for granted now."

"I'd like to ask a question," said Philip quietly.

"Well, what?"

"If you are not fooling with me, what the deuce are you doing with me?"

"You'll find that out soon enough."

"Well, where are you taking me?"

"That's what I was going to tell you. We're going to take you aboard of a boat that is lying at the pier down

here. It's a canal boat that runs by steam, and the cap'n is a friend of ours.

"When we get you aboard the boat we're going to have a talk with you, and if you answer the questions we ask you and answer them all right, why, there won't be any trouble for you or for anybody else—see?"

"I reckon I see all right."

"Well, that ain't all. When we go out on the pier to get on the boat we've got to let go of you, maybe. That depends whether somebody will be watching us too close or not.

"Now, I want you to understand that if we do let go we ain't going to let you get away. If you take any chance on doing that, you'll get hurt so it'll last. I'll lay you out with this little cable before you have taken two steps, and I'll do it if I go to prison the next minute. If you go quiet and don't make any breaks nothing will happen, if you don't take my advice and act upon it, something will happen that I'll be mighty bad for you—see?"

"Yes, I see."

"Do you think you'll go along all right, too?"

"I reckon so."

"Don't you know who I am, Pommery?"

"No. Who are you?"

"Ever hear of Swipes?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm Swipes. Maybe that will assure you that I won't stand for any fooling."

"Maybe it will."

"Come on, then."

Swipes gave a few hasty directions to his companions as to how they were to walk the remainder of their journey, in order to guard their prisoner, and then they continued on their way.

The name of Swipes had, for a moment, almost struck terror to the heart of Philip Pommery, for it was a name that was known and dreaded from one end of the city to the other among the boys who lived in the streets.

He was known among them as a young ruffian and villain who stopped at nothing. He had earned his name, and it was the only name by which he was known at all, in two ways, both from his unquestioned ability at "swiping" things without getting himself caught, and for the terrible force of the "swipes" he could inflict with his fists, for he was known to be as stout as a young giant, and as cruel as a tiger.

Swipes was a creature who is worth a short description. He was short and wide, but not thick. Indeed, it seemed sometimes as if there was no flesh at all on his bones.

He had a little, wizened face, a narrow, inquisitive nose, a mouth which, owing to the thinness of his lips, looked like a slit cut across his face. A chin that stuck out almost as far as the end of his nose, and which came quite to a point. Bushy hair of a whitish yellow which covered his head in a mass that looked like a sailor's swab, that grew down quite to the front of his ears, and even after that, seemed to keep on till it spread all over his face in a sort of fuzz. And in the midst of it all, two little ferret eyes, round, like beads; black, like jet buttons; piercing, like gimlets; fringed in white lashes, and underneath white brows till they looked like bits of tar dropped into a snow bank; and, more than all that, they were eyes which seemed never to wink, which looked at you with a steady, burning stare, like the eyes of a snake.

Swipes' shoulders were remarkably wide and bony. His arms were long, thin, and wiry, and they possessed wonderful strength. His legs were short and they bowed considerably.

Lastly, the age of Swipes was a profound mystery. He might have been eighteen or thirty. Nobody knew and nobody could tell by looking at him.

Seen across the street among boys he would be taken for a boy as young as any of his companions. Seen near at hand, with men around him, he seemed not younger than they were.

But his face was full of wickedness and cruelty, full of badness, full of everything which should make its owner shunned by those who go about in the full light of day and who do not hesitate to look a policeman straight in the eye.

The certainty that he was in the power of Swipes, and the uncertainty of what Swipes intended to do with his power, weighed upon Philip's mind so that he made no effort to resist the fate, whatever it was, toward which they were dragging him, and he walked among his captors blindly and with apparent willingness down the street, across South Street and out upon the pier to its end.

There, lying against the wharf, was the steam canal boat to which Swipes had referred, and without hesitation the boys led him aboard of it, going aft to the hatch and then motioning to him to descend the ladder ahead of them.

This he did, starting down the ladder into the darkness, but ere he reached the bottom his feet were knocked from under him, and as he fell to the bottom he was conscious that something was thrown over his head, and that a heavy object fell upon him, and then—unconsciousness.

CHAPTER III.

"FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!"

When Pommery opened his eyes to consciousness again he was no longer in the dark, although a glance convinced him that he was alone in the cabin of the canal boat to which Swipes and his gang had taken him so forcefully.

He listened, and could hear the chuck-chuck of the engine and the pounding of the propeller against the water, and he knew that the boat had been got under way since he was brought aboard of it.

He made another discovery also, which was not reassuring, and that was that he was bound so firmly that he could not hope to escape.

His feet were tied together at his ankles. Another piece of rope was tied around his legs at his knees, and his hands were bound together behind his back. Then, as if all this were not sufficient, still another rope was passed around his waist, fastened firmly, and then carried to a ring in the bunk over the one in which he was lying, and there tied into many knots.

"Geel!" muttered Pommery. "I reckon they think I'm worth keeping. Wonder they didn't gag me! Boat's going, too. Wonder where? They must have wanted me real bad, they must."

"I wonder if that whole business was a put-up job? Pete Morgan and Chris Connors coming across the street, and Pete slapping my jaw in order to get me into a fight. Anyhow, I walloped him to the queen's taste. By Jove! I've got it! I know their game now as plain as if it was

writ on the wall there in letters of fire! Sure's you're born! Gee!"

He was silent a moment and then continued:

"Sure thing! That's why they asked me about Nick Carter. It's as plain as the nose on your face, Mr. Pommery Sec. Pete Morgan has joined Swipes' gang."

"Somehow the outfit has got on to the fact that I'm working for Nick Carter, and they have made up their minds that they are going to make use of me, somehow. I wonder how? That's what Swipes meant when he talked about my answering questions, all right. Huh! I reckon they'll find that Pommery Sec's a little too dry for them at that, before they get throught with me."

For a while he remained, listening, but he could hear nothing but the steady pounding of the propeller against the water, and the thumping of the engine as it forced the wheel around; and so more than an hour passed by.

"I wonder if Nick Carter will think I have deserted when I don't show up, according to promise, at six o'clock to-night?" he asked himself once, noticing by a little clock that hung at one end of the cabin that the time was rapidly approaching that hour. "I reckon he'll know that I'd be there if I could," continued Pommery, with an air of conviction.

"It's funny that nobody comes near me here," he murmured, after a moment's pause.

Fifteen minutes longer he waited, and then he shouted.

"Hello, there!" he called lustily. "Where in blazes are you all, anyhow? Why don't somebody come down here and say 'Hello!' or something?"

Again he waited and again there was no response; and then, with a grim smile, he muttered:

"Bet a quarter I'll wake somebody this time."

He rested a moment in order to get his strength, and then, with all the strength of his lungs, he yelled:

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

It had the desired effect.

There was a rush of feet on the deck over his head, a hasty throwing back of the hatch, and then a body, so big that it would scarcely pass through the opening, slid, rather than climbed down the ladder; and Pommery, looking upon this strange apparition, burst into a hearty laugh which he could not have suppressed had he tried his utmost.

Never in all his life, not even in a museum, had he seen a human being so fat. He was like a balloon with a pair of feet stuck in at one end and a head fastened upon the other.

"Vere iss dot fire, alreaty?" the fat man demanded, as soon as he reached the floor of the cabin; and then, perceiving that there was no fire, and that the occupant of the bunk was laughing at him, he approached nearer, and with slow deliberation inquired:

"Vot iss funny, hey?"

But Pommery was still laughing and could not reply.

"Dot must be a good choke, hey?" he continued. "Vas it fire vot you sait? Den meppy you feel petter bimeby if I giff you some leetle fire—hey? It would pe too pad if you was disappointed, hey, mine leetle frient—vot you call Pummery-sicken? I giff you von leetle fire, den meppy you not calls for any more, alreaty yet again."

With easy deliberation the huge German lighted an old-fashioned sulphur match, and then while the sulphur was still sizzling upon it, he rubbed the end of the burning instrument against the end of Pommery's nose.

It inflicted, as every one must know, an exceedingly painful wound, for the sulphur continued to sizzle and burn into the flesh after the match was itself withdrawn from proximity to Philip's nose, and his hands were tied behind him so that he could not raise them to defend himself or to solace the wounded member.

It stopped his laughing instantly, and he was on the point of crying out with pain and rage, when he suddenly remembered that he was entirely at the mercy of the fat scoundrel and that it would be best for him to bear what he had to bear in silence.

He shut his lips tightly together and almost held his breath, while he fixed his glance upon the pig eyes of his huge tormentor.

"You vant some more off dot fire, meppy, alreaty?" asked the German.

"No. I've had enough, thank you," said Pommery calmly, although tears, caused by suffering, were in his eyes.

"So? Goot! Ven you vant some more you sing out, hey? Und I pring 'em. You t'ought dot was sehr funny ven I coomes by de hatchway down, hey? Dot fire call off yours—you vas a funny poy, hey? Vas dot vot you was schmilng so lout about, hey?"

"Oh, no," replied Pommery. "That wasn't what I was laughing at."

"No? Meppy you vas tell me, hey, vat iss it you vas schmilng about?"

"Why, I have been lying here wondering what it was that fell on me when I came through the hatch into the cabin. Something took my breath away when I struck the floor."

"Und you fount oud vat it vas, hey?"

"Sure."

"It vas me; I sot down on you."

"That's what I thought. Do you like to sit down on people and then come in on them when they can't help themselves, and burn their noses with matches?" asked Pommery resentfully.

"Sometimes—yah—even they laugh at me und call for fire because I'm fat. Does dot leetle spot on the end of your nose burn alreaty?"

"Like blazes."

"Vell, dot's nice, ain't it? Meppy, bimeby you call for fire some more, hey?"

"No. I've had enough. I say, untie my hands, will you?"

"For vy?"

"So I can doctor my nose."

"I doctor him for you. Vot you vant? More fire?"

"No, no, no. Where are the fellows who brought me here?"

"De vot did you say?"

"Where are the boys who brought me here?"

"By golly! Did you think dot somebody brought you here? Dere was nobody vot pring you here. You vas coome py your lonesome, alreaty, hey?"

"Where are you taking me?"

"Vere vas I took you? Vell, vell, vell! Wouldn't dot char you, hey? Vere vas I tooking you to, iss it? Vy, I vasn't tooking you to anyveres, vas I? You vas dere mit de punk, yelling fire und schmilng all ofer your face, und I vas here. Vot you driving at, leetle poy, hey?"

"Where is Swipes?"

"Schvipes? Who vas it, dot Schvipes, hey?"

"The fellow who brought me to this boat. Swipes. Where is he?"

"Ach! Schvipes! Yah, yah. Dot iss so! Schvipes."

"Where is he?"

"Well, I told you. If you was wait long enough, bimehy after a leetle vile, ven he gets quit and reaty meppy he told you vere he iss, himself, hey?"

"Won't you give me a drink of water?"

"Vater? Dere ain'd any on der boat. I giff you some bier—even I cooms pack."

The strange fat man turned abruptly, hurried to the ladder with an alacrity that was astonishing in one of his mammoth proportions, and having mounted it with the agility of a cat, disappeared through the hatchway upon the deck.

The smarting pain which Pommery suffered from the sulphur burn on his nose was almost intolerable, and when he was again alone he turned and twisted in a vain effort to rub the wounded member against something to allay the pain; but there was no use. He was bound too securely, and there was nothing for him to do but to bear his tribulations in silence and await the coming of relief.

It was quite plain to him that his captors who had brought him to the boat had not remained aboard of it after he had been made a prisoner in the cabin. It was also plain that they were taking him somewhere, for some specific purpose, but whatever that could be, it was impossible for him even to conjecture.

But he was not long to remain in doubt.

Another hour passed, and then he felt the engines stop. Presently the wheel reversed and pounded against the water angrily. Then the boat bumped against a wharf somewhere, and he heard the sound made by hurrying feet upon the deck over his head.

For more than an hour he had been in total darkness, and he knew that night had settled down over the world outside the cabin.

The hour had come and gone when he was due to return to the house of Nick Carter, for he had been upon an errand for the detective at the time of the encounter in the street, that had ended so disastrously and resulted in his capture and abduction by Swipes and his gang.

He was wondering if Nick Carter would make any effort to find him when he failed to return to the house, or if the detective would know that Pommery had simply been detained, and would not start a search for him.

Suddenly the hatch was thrown away again and a lighted lantern was swung for a moment through the opening.

Then, much to his astonishment, he heard the voice of Swipes—a squeaky, querulous voice it was—say laughingly: "Burned his nose, did you, Hans, when he asked for fire? Well, we'll burn his eyes out and cut out his tongue to boot if he doesn't make up his mind to listen to good advice—and follow it, too. Come on, pals. We'll get him out of this. He will be safer up in the cliff house."

CHAPTER IV.

THE CAVE OF THE CRIMINALS.

"Well, Pommery, how do you feel?" was the salutation that Swipes gave him when he descended, lantern in hand, and stood beside the bunk where Philip was lying, bound and helpless.

"I suspect that I'm feverish, Swipes; my nose is hot," replied Pommery, determined that he would not show the

white feather in any sense of the word, from that time on; and also entirely decided that he would keep cool and permit nothing, no matter what might happen, to ruffle or disconcert him.

"Yelled fire, did you?"

"Yes. Wanted to find out who was here. You see, I felt sort of lonesome with nobody around to talk to," answered Pommery.

"Hans gave you a little dose of fire, did he?"

"Yes. Hans is very obliging."

"Answered all your questions, did he?"

"Every one—only he talked German and I couldn't understand him."

"Too bad, wasn't it? Well, never mind. Your eyes and ears shall answer the questions for you before you are very much older."

"I suppose you'd like to have your hands and feet free, eh?"

"Well, I wouldn't mind, if you don't think you are afraid that I'll pick up this scow and run away with it."

Swipes grinned, but he made no reply. He took his knife from his pocket and one by one severed the cords that bound Pommery, and then with his strong arms, he swung the boy around into a sitting posture on the edge of the bunk.

"Sit still a minute till the blood gets to circulating," he said. "I didn't know they tied you up so tight as all that. It wasn't necessary; but I guess it didn't hurt you much."

"How is that? Feel better?" Swipes asked, after a few moments.

"Yes."

"Can you stand on your feet now?"

"I reckon so."

"Well, here's your hat. Get on your feet and follow me. Stop, though; I forgot about something. Pete!" he called.

Pete Morgan replied from the deck above, and in an instant more came sliding down the ladder.

He did not look at Philip or act as if he recognized him at all.

"Hold the lantern, Pete," ordered Swipes. "I'll put the bandage on his eyes myself. When you did it the other day, you know what the result was."

He stepped behind Philip and in a moment more had bound a thick bandage tightly around his head so that every ray of light was excluded and the boy was as effectually blinded as if his eyes had been put out.

"Now, Pommery, listen," he said.

"I'm listening."

"I'm going to take you ashore. You'll climb a few steps and go through some unpleasant places, only you won't see them because your eyes are blinded. When you get to the place I'm going to take you you'll be up against it for fair."

"Seems to me as if that was the case already."

"Well, it is; only not so much so as it will be later. You'll be asked a lot of questions. If you answer them all right, all right, you won't have a thing to fear, and you stand a chance of being made one of us."

"One of who?"

"You'll find out soon enough. I just want to say this to you for a pointer. We've heard some things about you which will make you one of two things to me and the members of my gang."

"What things?"

"Well, I don't mind telling you, just for your own sake, before you go any farther, that you are in a position to be either a very valuable member to our little association, or you will make about the most handy corpse I know about."

"I don't pretend to understand you, Swipes."

"Well, you don't have to—yet. You will understand soon enough. I'm trying to do you a favor now and give you a pointer or two."

"Then try to be a little plainer, for I don't catch on worth a cent."

"Well, Pommery, if it is true what the fellows have been told, about you and Nick Carter, you stand a chance of ringing in mighty close to the chief and the council of ten—provided you have got good sense and are willing to do as you are told. And if it is still true that you are next to Carter, and you won't do as you are told to do, the crabs and lobsters will be nibbling around your pretty face and your singed nose before you are many hours older."

"A word to the wise, that's all," concluded Swipes ominously.

Like a flash it all came to Philip why he had been captured and taken away.

He understood at last why he had been taken to the river, made a prisoner and brought to this place.

Here no doubt was located the headquarters of that mysterious gang of crooks of which so much had been whispered of late, but of which so little was really known.

Through some of the boys, these crooks had learned that he, Pommery, was in the confidence of the great detective, Nick Carter, and now they had made a captive of him in order to force him to turn into a spy, to aid them in their work and to betray the great detective into their hands.

Pommery knew that Swipes was a desperate character, as unprincipled as he was deep, and he was convinced that the threats that had been uttered by him were not idle ones.

Nevertheless, as they led him up the ladder and out upon the deck of the boat, he felt his heart thrill within him, for it came over him suddenly that in a measure he represented Nick Carter himself at that moment. That all the reason why his enemies had made a captive of him was in, the hopes that he would become a Judas and betray his master.

He wondered if they believed that they could think of terrors sufficiently awful to induce him to do such a thing as that, through fear, and he smiled to himself when he thought of it.

"They think they have got an easy mark in me, just because I'm a kid," he muttered to himself. "Well, I'll show them that even a kid can be too much for their kind; but I'll play their own game if I can. Maybe—I can learn something that it will be worth while to tell the chief—if ever I see him again."

Still blindfolded, he was taken ashore and thence led along the shingle of the beach for a considerable distance.

At last, however, they came to a stop, and then presently ascended some stairs.

Then, Philip felt himself thrust into a chair in which he was strapped, and then, having been told to hold on tightly to the arms of the chair, he was swung into the air and he felt that he was ascending rapidly through the dark to some unknown height on the cliff above.

Then the chair swung in. Hands seized the rope and

drew the chairs into some recess. The straps were unfastened, he was bidden to stand upon his feet, and then, still blindfolded, he was led away along an ascending path which seemed to take him into a sort of cavern, judging from the coldness and dampness of the air around him.

Thus he was led on and on, making frequent turns, sometimes ascending, sometimes descending, often turning to the right, and frequently going off at a tangent to the left, and so, traversing what seemed to him to be an interminable distance, until at last he was brought to a halt and the bandage was removed from his eyes.

For a moment he gazed around him stupidly, almost unseeing, like an owl that is caught in the glare of sunlight, for the room—or rather the amphitheater in which he found himself—was quite brilliantly lighted, if anything which is lighted by torches and lanterns can be said to be brilliantly lighted.

It was a marvelous place in which he found himself. A glance told him that much—a wonderful place.

If a room should be hollowed from the middle of a mountain, shaped like a dome, or to be more exact, like a pineapple cheese, it would exactly describe the shape of the cavern in which Pommery's eyes had been unbandaged.

Consider that place to be twenty-five yards in diameter and as many high, line it all the way around with granite rocks that are full of mica, and therefore glisten like myriads of diamonds when the light strikes them; make the floor of it a flat rock with a depression running through the center, and fill that depression with a silently flowing stream; cut a fissure into the mountainside, so that it extends away out of sight through the darkness beyond, and place that fissure at the upper end or side of the dome-shaped room, and another fissurelike at the lower side; puncture a long, narrow slot along the crest of the dome, not wider, in fact, than a man's hand, but nevertheless wide enough to permit smoke and dampness to escape through it, and you have some idea of the interior of the retreat to which the captors of Philip Pommery conveyed him.

With the bandage suddenly removed from his eyes, Philip saw all that has been described quickly, and while he was trying, apparently, to recover the use of his eyesight.

But he saw more than that.

He saw that he was in the center of a group of at least a hundred men, and he could hear voices around him which convinced him that there were as many more who were not visible to his eyes.

It was evident to him that they had been lounging about the place when he was brought in, and that they had pushed forward for the mere purpose of having a look at the newcomer; and as they pushed forward, many of them were still in the act of adjusting their masks to their faces, half masks which were only intended to conceal the upper part of their features.

Some of the men had already adjusted theirs before they thrust themselves forward; others had fixed theirs on so imperfectly that they afforded little or no protection; still others stood with theirs in their hands, as if they had either forgotten to put them on, or did not care to take the trouble; some were still in the act of adjusting them.

And all the while among the throng there was the murmur of hoarse voices, crude jests, vulgar expletives, and laughter.

"Another coo-coo clockie, Swipes?" asked one of the jesters. "Do you think he'll strike the hour?"

"Where did you get the babe, Swipes?" asked another.

"It'll be plumb ten years before he can raise a beard. But I say, old man, he'll make good bait, and Foxy and I are going fishing in the morning. Who is he, Swipes?—Prince Henry of Prussia?"

CHAPTER V.

TAKING THE WRONG BUCK BY THE HORN.

It sometimes happens that the merest trifles of incident will startle us the most.

Did any one of my readers ever have it happen to him that a stranger suddenly accosted him on the street and asked to be directed to that very reader's place of abode?

Such an experience is somewhat startling and rather disconcerting; but, nevertheless, such things do happen.

Just such an experience happened, in fact, to Nick Carter himself.

It was at four o'clock of the afternoon. The time when Pommery Sec was so boldly abducted.

Pommery had been sent upon an errand by the detective, and he was to return and report at six that evening.

In the meantime the detective had gone about other things, and one of them had taken him rather unexpectedly into the lower section of the city—in fact, in the same neighborhood to which he had sent the lad.

It so happened that Nick was arrayed in a disguise which he had not worn for a long time in the city of New York, but which, long ago, was quite familiar to the readers of these records; in fact, he was dressed in his one-time favorite and justly famous costume of Old Thunderbolt.

You can see reproductions of the Old Thunderbolt character on the street almost any day. He is the man from the country. The middle-aged man with the shrewd eyes, the happy "you-can't-call-me-down" smile, and the general free-and-easy, sauntering gait which the man who is accustomed to crossing fields and walking through woods cannot lay aside when he finds himself on the city streets.

The detective wore the wonderful coat with its detachable tails, its adjustable collar, and its four-ply reversible patterns; that coat, with its inexhaustible pockets which were always kept filled with the necessary paraphernalia for many disguises and changes.

The hat, the trousers, even the boots he wore on his feet were masterpieces of art in the line of changing disguise, and it seemed almost incredible that one man could carry so many things to do it with, and yet be unhampered by their presence.

Nick Carter had made the statement many times that with the costume of Old Thunderbolt on his back, he could appear in twelve different characters in thirty-six minutes, and that he would defy any person to recognize any one of them as one he had seen before, or as being the original of the twelve, the great detective himself.

Last but not least Nick Carter carried the inevitable gripsack, which was also a marvel in its way, and which had been through more campaigns with the great detective than any other single article of equipment that he possessed.

And so, arrayed as described, with the gripsack in his hand and the inevitable straw in his mouth, he was standing on the steps which lead down from the Third Avenue station into City Hall Park, meditatively chewing the straw and otherwise appearing as if he had just arrived from the country and had not yet made up his mind where to put up for the night. Suddenly the littlest kind of

a little boy, with a small bundle of papers in his arms, ran up to him.

"Say, mister," panted the boy.

"Hello, sonny," replied Nick kindly. "Now what do yew want, hey?"

"Do you know Nick Carter?" asked the boy.

For just an instant Nick Carter was genuinely surprised. If a grown man, or even a big boy, had asked him that question, he would have had a reply ready on the end of his tongue, but to have a little mite of humanity like this one ask him in that unconcerned manner—well, his instant thought was that some man nearer by had penetrated his disguise, or had thought he did, and that he had sent the lad to him to ask the question while he stood not far distant to observe the effect of it, and perhaps to make sure of the countryman's true identity.

The pause that the detective permitted himself to make before he replied to the question was not long enough to have attracted the notice of any person, even if they were watching; then he wagged his head in a slow negative, and replied:

"Nope. Never heerd of no Nick Carter; but I know of a Tom Carter. He lives down on the Beaseley place. Just got married. Married a niece of mine. I say, sonny, aire yew lost?"

"Lost—nothin'," replied the boy.

"Then what aire yew askin' fur that aire Nick Carter fur, my son?"

"Cos I wanted to find him."

"Did somebody send yew to me to ask that question, sonny?"

"Sure thing."

"Who?"

"The copper over dere at the entrance to the bridge. I asked him and he gave me the ha! ha! and then he pointed over here and told me to run across the street and ask yew."

"Oh, I see. He thought I'd know, did he? Well, now, what did yew want of Nick Carter?"

"I only wanted to tell him that a friend of his'n had got into trouble."

"You see, sir," the boy went on, "a lot o' kids surrounded Pommery Sec on the street just a few minutes ago, and they took him off somewhere, and I know they'll do him dirt 'fore they git through with him."

"Pom has been good to me. He's licked more'n one kid fur teasin' me, and when the fellers got him in tow I chased along and seen 'em take him to the river and put him on a boat."

"Then I told a big copper about it, and the copper only laughed at me and told me to grow up and get wise."

"Then I told another copper, and he wouldn't listen at all, and then I told a man, and he told me to run home to mamma, and then I asked the copper over there, and he sent me to you."

"You're a good leetle chap, ain't you, now? Do yew know where that boat is?"

"Betcher life I do."

"Well, ef yew'll show me where that boat is I'll buy all yewer papers and give yew a quarter besides. Is that a bargain?"

"Sure thing. Come on."

The little fellow took Nick by the hand and started to lead him away, and as they hastened forward to cross Park Row, they talked.

"You ain't told me yet how you happened to ask for Nick Carter at all," said Nick.

"Pommery told me he was workin' for him."

"Do you know who he is?"

"Yep. He's a detective."

"And Pommery told yew he was workin' for him, did he?"

"Yep."

"Did he say anything else about him?"

"Nope."

"That's funny, ain't it? Say, bub, did yew know any of the fellers yew saw takin' yewer friend Pommery to the river?"

"I only jest knowed one of 'em."

"And who was he?"

"They call him Swipes."

"Swipes, hey? Say, bub?"

"Say it yerself; I'm listenin'."

"How do you happen to know Swipes?"

"'Cos I live in the same house where he does. He's thumped me around ever since I kin remember. It's down in Delancey Street."

"When my fadder was livin' Swipes didn't thump me so often, but now he don't do nothin' else if he happens to see me; and it's all because I hit him in the eye onced with a snowball; so's he had a black eye."

"Say, mister," cried the boy, in an anxious voice, when the strangely assorted couple had made their way to the East River water front.

"What is it, bub?"

"The boat's gone."

"Well, maybe we can find out what boat it was. You wait here, boy, while I go out on the pier. There are some men there and I'll ask 'em."

There were two men loitering on the end of the pier, and when they saw the seeming countryman approaching them they straightened up and exchanged glances with each other.

Here they thought, evidently, was easy prey falling directly into their hands as if from the sky.

"Hello, Uncle John!" exclaimed one of them genially, taking a few steps toward Nick, who was advancing toward him down the pier. "Are you taking in the sights?"

"Yep; one of 'em," replied Nick, looking straight at his questioner. "We never see nothing quite like you be, down in our parts. It don't take more'n a day there, to git that rosy red you've got on the end of yewer nose, an' I shouldn't wonder if yew've been the best part of yewer natural life gittin' that. Besides, yew didn't git my name jest straight."

"Is that so. What is your name?"

"Well, if yew wanten put the uncle afore it, es yew did jest now, yew'll hev tew say Uncle Josh—fur tew reasons: One of 'em is that when I'm ter hum I'm called quite a joshier, and t'other one is that my cognomen is Joshua Juniper. Say!"

"Well, Uncle Josh, what is it?"

"Has there been a boat here lately?—one that ain't been gone long?"

"Yes; there was one that left the end of the pier about half an hour ago. Are you looking for Hans Pretzel?"

"Who?"

"Hans Pretzel."

"No."

"Well, it was his boat that was here. I thought maybe you'd be looking for Hans. Come along to the end of the pier and I'll show you where his boat laid before it went away."

The fellow stepped forward and took hold of one of Nick's arms, and at the same moment his companion sidled up on the other side and grasped the other one; and then, before Nick had ventured to offer a word of protest, they began to hustle him between them toward the end of the pier.

Moreover, at the same time Nick knew that they would seize the opportunity to go through his pockets.

It was the sort of thing that happens almost daily along the docks of the East River during the summer time, and one to which an inexperienced countryman who has passed the age of alertness is likely to fall a victim before he knows it, when once he become enmeshed in the toils of a "strong-arm" gang.

But this particular occasion was one in which the two strong-arm workers might have been said to have taken the wrong tack by the horn.

They had not taken three steps with their intended victim between them, when Nick stopped with a suddenness that suggested that he had collided with a brick wall. At the same instant he threw the upper part of his body forward and tripped both men with almost simultaneous exactness.

The result was entirely unexpected, for both men shot into the air, half turned, and then landed sprawling upon their bellies on the dock.

CHAPTER VI.

NICK CARTER GAINS INFORMATION.

No sooner had the two men struck the planking of the dock than they leaped to their feet again, both cursing; and they turned angrily, and doubtless would have jumped bodily upon the supposed countryman, with the intention of giving him a good pummeling, but the moment they looked at him they paused, uncertain how to act.

The countryman was slapping his legs, dancing about, and laughing, as if he had seen the funniest thing in all his lifetime.

"By gosh!" he cried. "I wouldn't ha' missed that not fur a new litter of pigs. Say, boys, did yew stub yewer toes? Whew! Yew fellers kin turn summersets tew beat spring crows, yew kin."

"Hurt yew enny, hey?" and Nick stopped laughing, and his voice took on an anxious tone.

Both men were altogether too mad to answer, but only one of them rushed forward, and that was the one who had done the talking when Nick Carter first appeared on the scene.

With a cry of rage the tough sprang toward Nick with his arm raised.

But when the blow fell it did not strike the detective. It fell, instead, into the embrace of an iron grip which closed around the wrist.

With a cry of pain the man sank almost to his knees in front of the detective.

"Kin yew swim, son?" drawled Nick; "'cos if yew can't yewer goin' ter be in hard luck right now. There yew go!"

As he finished speaking he raised the man to his feet

again, turned him half around, and then, with a kick, sent him spinning toward the edge of the dock.

For the fraction of an instant the man seemed to hang, as if poised, on the edge of the dock over the water, and then, with a cry, he overbalanced and fell splashing into the river.

As he fell Nick turned toward the other man just in time, for that worthy, seeing the discomfiture of his companion, and already having made up his mind that it was no countryman with whom they had to do, had drawn an ugly-looking knife from its place of concealment and was already rushing forward with the weapon upraised to strike.

Nick took one quick step backward as the man rushed toward him. As he did so his right foot shot into the air like lightning, and the toe caught his assailant's arm exactly on the wrist.

There was a cry of rage and pain as the knife flew high into the air, circled, and finally fell into the water not far from the spot where the first man had gone overboard.

Then an unexpected thing happened, for the man who had wielded the knife suddenly sank to the planks of the dock without a sound or a cry, and senseless, and a small, round stone rolled to the dock with him.

"I hit him just where I aimed," said a voice from behind, and the little boy who had piloted Nick from City Hall Park stepped into view.

"I saw him wid de knife," said the boy, "an' I let fly. I kin chuck one of dem round stones almost as straight es I kin see."

"So it seems," said Nick.

"Hope I didn't kill him, mister."

"No fear of that, my boy. His skull is too thick for that. Run back now to the end of the wharf where you were, and wait for me. I'll be there in a moment."

Leaving the senseless man where he was, Nick walked to the end of the pier and gazed over into the water, and he smiled broadly when he saw the man whom he had so unceremoniously kicked into the river, clinging to a spike in the piling, while he called out lustily for help.

"Yew was purty hot a minute ago, mister," said Nick, looking down at him. "Maybe if yew feel a leetle cooler now I might help yew up."

"Here," he added, and he leaned forward and lowered one end of a pair of handcuffs so that the man in the water could reach it, "you shove that onto one of your wrists and lock it there and I'll have you up here in a jiffy."

"Fly cop, eh?" said the man; but he obeyed the order. A moment later Nick drew him to the top of the pier and had fastened the other iron on his other wrist, and so that both hands were behind his back.

"Now you just wait a minute till I attend to the wants of your pal and then I'll talk to you."

The other one, he who had been knocked senseless by the stone, was just struggling to his feet, and a second pair of handcuffs was soon adjusted to his wrists.

"Now," said Nick, "you can sit there. We'll drop the country end of it for a moment. It's up to you whether you go with me to headquarters or I forget that I've seen you to-day. What do you say?"

"What you goin' to take us to headquarters for? We ain't done nothing."

"Well, we won't argue that. I have said it is up to you

whether you go there or not. You can make me forget that I have seen you to-day if you want to. I'll keep my word. No doubt on that score. If you earn your liberty you shall have it."

"What do you want us to do?" asked the man who had been in the water.

"Talk."

"What's your name?"

"Forget it."

"What do you want us to talk about?"

"A little picnic excursion."

"Say, boss, what're you givin' us?"

"A pointer for you to talk about. Didn't you see a little picnic excursion come down to this wharf? Wasn't one of your friends of the party?"

"Mind, I'm not asking any questions; it is for you to talk. If you want me to forget that I have seen you to-day, talk."

"Maybe, when you say picnic party and mention a friend of ours, why, maybe you mean a feller called Swipes," said the wet man tentatively.

"Maybe I do."

"And some friends of hisn wot came down to make a little call on Hans Pretzel."

"Shouldn't wonder if I did," said Nick, smiling.

"Shut up, Mange," ordered the man who had been knocked down with the stone. "We both might as well go up to headquarters right now as to blow on Swipes. I'd as soon be up against third degree as Swipes, I would."

"Maybe you would, Bill Bower," retorted Mange, "but I wouldn't. I ain't takin' no chances with headquarters, not if I can help it."

"And," said Nick, "don't forget that I have said that if you talk, and talk right, I will forget that I have seen you to-day, which means that you won't be taking chances with either one."

"But it's getting late. If you're going to talk, talk fast."

"Maybe you mean that the call they made was on the steam canal boat wot Hans navigates, which is called the *Jolly Drovers*, and which sailed from this port a matter of an hour ago?"

Nick nodded.

"Go on," he said.

"Well, you know that wasn't really no picnic, 'cos the boys didn't stay. They all moseyed out as soon as they had made their call. Maybe you knowed that."

"Maybe I did. Go on."

"Well, as I said, they all moseyed out, so there wasn't no picnic, after all."

"I guess we'll have to go up to headquarters," said Nick.

"Well, look here, there can't be much of a picnic if only one feller stays aboard, can there?"

"Might be—later," said Nick, glancing keenly at his informant and winking solemnly as if to give the impression that he knew a great deal more than he really did about the subject.

"I don't know anything about that part of it."

"No?" said Nick. "That is unfortunate—for you."

"Well, I don't—nor Bill, either."

"Only where the boat went to," said Bill.

"You'd better start at the beginning and tell me the whole yarn," said Nick. "It will save time, and it will

make things easier for both of you. I'm getting mighty impatient."

"Looker here, mister fly cop," said Bill, shaking his head at Mange to warn him to keep still for a moment, "I don't know who you are and I don't care. Here's what we've got to say on the subject you're looking up, and all we've got to say, so you can take it or leave it, just as suits you."

"Let me hear it."

"Hans and the *Jolly Drower* came down the North River this morning early with a lot of stuff aboard of her, and there was a few fellers in the gang."

"They scattered and went ashore, and Swipes was one of 'em."

"After they'd gone Mange and me went aboard and played pinocle and rushed the growler along with Hans. He cooked us some grub and we had some more cards and beer."

"Bimeby we heard Swipes a-callin' down the hatch, and while Hans went on deck Mange and me hid in the hold. Swipes brought a kid down to the boat, and he chucked him down into the cabin. Hans fell on him, then they tied him up in one of the bunks, and Swipes and the fellers wot came with him moseyed back to town."

"While Hans was gettin' up steam," the tough added, "Mange and me lighted out, and that's all there is of it."

"Where was Hans to take the kid?" asked Nick.

"We don't know—either of us—so help me!"

"Which way did the boat go?"

"Around the Battery."

"Did nobody go on the boat with Hans?"

"Only his nigger helper."

"Where did Hans come from this morning?"

"Nyack; at least that's where he told us he had come from."

"Who was the kid they were taking away?"

"I didn't hear nothing but a nickname."

"What was that?"

"Pommery Sec."

"How often does Hans come here to this wharf?"

"Every day, almost."

"And he's got a black helper, has he?"

"Yes; that's all he keeps on the boat."

"What does he carry on the boat?"

"Freight."

"What kind of freight?"

"Well," drawled Bill, and he winked his eye slowly while he was speaking, "I ain't never took a good look at the freight, but if I wanted to see some of it I should manage to be around here to-morrow afternoon about three, 'cos I heard him say he was expecting a load about that time."

"All right!" said Nick. "I'm going to take those bracelets off you now, and if you'll take a word of advice from a stranger, you won't permit yourselves to be seen around these piers for about a week. You can go now, and don't be slow about it, either," concluded Nick.

CHAPTER VII.

A CONFEDERATED CRIMINAL TRUST.

When Nick returned to the shore end of the pier he found the boy still waiting for him.

"Bub," he said, "yewer a nice leetle kid, and I like you. Yew throwed that aire stone to beat the band, didn't yew,

now, hey? I told you that I'd buy yewer papers and give yew a quarter besides, didn't I?"

"Betcher life."

"Well, here's seventy-five cents fur the papers, and the quarter. How's that?"

"Too much. Papers ain't worth—"

"Never mind, that's what I choose tew give fur 'em. Now, say!"

"What, sir?"

"I want yew to dew something else for me, and when yew have done it I'll give you another dollar. Is that square, sonny?"

"Betcher life."

"Yew said that Swipes lives in the same house with yew, didn't yew?"

"Yep."

"Dew yew s'pose yew could find out when he gits hum tew-night?"

"Sure thing."

"Well, when he comes hum and yew know he is hum—no matter what time of day 'r night it happens tew be—yew run up to the corner of the Bowery and First Street. Do you know where that is?"

"Sure thing."

"When yew git onto the corner yew stand there and yell 'Patsy!' with all yewer might. Purty soon a boy'll come up to you an' say, 'Hello, Beeswax.' Then yew jest tell him what yew know about Swipes and yew'll git another dollar."

"Now tell me, son, what mout be your name."

"Tommy Pond."

"Well, Tommy, don't forgit. Patsy'll be a-waitin' fur yew es soon es it's dark to-night, and he'll wait there till yew come ef it takes all summer. In the meantime yew ain't to tell nobody else about our agreement, Tommy."

"Sure, Mike, I won't."

"Now skip along, and don't forgit. Good-by, Tommy, my boy."

As soon as the boy was gone, Nick hurried to the elevated road and took a train uptown, and half an hour later he was ringing the bell at the door of the house of one of the most remarkable men that New York City ever produced.

Chief Inspector Thomas Byrnes had not been connected with the police force of the city for many years, but it is safe to say that up to the time of his death, recently, he was better informed about the criminal classes than any other living man, with the possible exception of Nick Carter himself.

But a few facts had come unexpectedly to the knowledge of Nick that afternoon which made him feel suddenly as if he would like to hold a short conversation with the great inspector. The questions themselves will develop the reasons for, as well as the wisdom of, that sudden determination on the part of the detective.

Nick was still in the garb of Joshua Juniper, but it was a disguise with which the inspector was familiar, and as soon as he saw Nick he laughed.

"Does me good to see you, Nick," he said, "even if it is in that dress. How are you?"

"Oh, I'm well, thank you," answered the detective.

"What's up? What brought you here to-day?" The inspector's voice took on a businesslike tone and he squared himself about in his chair.

"Only an idea. Great aches from little toe-corns grow, so they say, and I am a believer in the theory that there are times when great cases from little clues develop; aren't you, inspector?"

"Sometimes, although I'm not much of a theorist, you know. I leave that to fellows like you. And besides, Nick, I'm so long out of the business—"

"Well, this is something that happened when you were in the business."

"Oh! well, in that case maybe I can be of assistance."

"It happened when my father was alive—when I was a boy. I remember hearing you two talking together about it once."

"I can't remember the name of the case," continued Nick, "or anything about it save this. That there was a band of French counterfeiters came to this country and thought they were going to run things their own way, and in fact they did run them their own way as long as the government detectives tried to handle the proposition themselves; but when they called you and my father into the case something happened. Do you recall the case I refer to?"

"Certainly. What about it? I don't think there is a member of that gang alive to-day, so I don't quite see how it can affect any case you happen to have on hand at this time."

"Didn't they have some sort of a retreat somewhere up the Hudson River?"

"Yes, up above Nyack."

"That's just what I thought. Where was it, and what was it?"

"Why, it had been an old quarry or a mine—I never did know just what—left over from Revolutionary days, I think. Whoever had worked the place had hollowed out an immense place in the solid rock. After that they had either put in a bigger blast than usual, or nature had rebelled—at least something happened, and both sides of the hole they had dug fell in, so that their tops came together and formed a regular cavern underneath."

"Then, as the years went by, earth and dirt collected on the top of the thing, trees grew there, and vegetation kept collecting for long years to come until all evidence of that hole in the earth was obliterated."

"Somehow, the French counterfeiter stumbled on that place and made his headquarters there. It was a den of dens, I tell you. It puzzled us for a long time. It was your father who finally found it, Nick."

"What was done to the den itself after you cleaned it out?" asked Nick.

"It was blown up, I think."

"Don't you know whether it was or not?"

"Well, I didn't see it done. It was out of my bailiwick, you know. The sheriff of that county told me that he would do it, and afterward he sent me word that it had been done. That is all I know about that part of it."

"Then it is possible that the place might be in existence yet?"

"Quite possible, but hardly probable, I should say."

"What was the name of that French forger?" questioned the detective.

"Bouvier—Paul Bouvier."

"I thought so. Inspector, did you happen to notice the name of the man whom I took out of Crook's Dive recently?"

"It was Bouvier. His first name was Jean."

"He was the one who murdered Mrs. Lawton Langdon. Yes, I remember. It may interest you to know that Paul Bouvier did have a son, and his name was Jean. I never saw him, so I could not say if this is the same one. But even so, I don't see how the two are connected now."

"I'll tell you. It is not long since I was in France for a short time. While there I ran across a condition which I have reason to suppose is being duplicated here now."

"What was that?"

"Organized thievery."

The inspector shrugged his shoulders.

"That's old," he said.

"Yes; in one way, but it is new in the way I mean."

"Then how do you mean?"

"Why, simply that the professional crooks have organized themselves into a trust, if you can abuse the word."

"A criminal trust, eh?" exclaimed the inspector, laughing.

"That's a good one."

"A confederated criminal trust. Such a thing exists in France, although on a very small scale, and confined to the poorer classes of thievery. Here, I think, it exists on a larger scale, and I think I have unwittingly got on the track of it."

"How?"

"Well, through a chain of circumstances."

"Let's hear them. Perhaps I can offer you a suggestion."

"During the last twenty-four hours I have had five applications from big merchants located in different parts of the city, to take up cases for them—cases in which each one has been systematically robbed, and, strangely enough, each one on almost the same identical system. These cases have been holding over for me till my return."

"I see. Well?"

"Remember, there are five of them and they are all merchants."

"Yes."

"This morning I received two calls from banks—one of them was downtown, the other is in Harlem. I have been to see both of them. Their cases are very peculiar, indeed."

"How, peculiar? Bank thievery is almost always the same," said the inspector.

"These cases are different in that there is nobody concerned with the institutions whom the officials care to accuse."

"Pshaw!"

"Wait, chief. I have advised them to say nothing for the present. I have my reasons for doing so, of course, and the principle one is that the two cases are precisely alike. We won't go into the particulars about the robberies now; I will touch upon that later. The point that I want to make is the coincidence."

"Well?"

"This morning I received a letter from a produce broker who wanted to see me. I couldn't go, and instead of telephoning him to that effect I sent a new boy I have on my staff to ask him to call upon me this evening."

"Later, I found that I could get to see him, and went, only to discover that he had not shown up at his office to-day, and later to learn that my boy had been kidnapped in broad daylight, and taken away on a boat that hails from Nyack—or near there."

"Ah! We're getting at it now, I see."

"We're coming to it—yes; but you haven't got the whole story yet."

"Well, go ahead."

"The broker, who did not appear at his office to-day, was kept at home by a blow on the head that he received last night, after he had sent the message to me. That's point one."

"My assistant, Patsy, was attacked and knocked down in the street last night, and only for the fact that he had a pistol and used it, and also that somebody heard the row and ran toward him, he would have disappeared off the face of the earth also. That's point two. You see, I am taking them in an inverse ratio."

"Well, what is point three?"

"The murder of Mrs. Lawton Langdon by Jean Bouvier."

"By gracious, Nick—"

"Wait, inspector. Did you ever hear of a man named Swipes?"

"Swipes? Yes. He was the slickest all-round crook I ever knew. He was killed in Hell's Kitchen, in 1897."

"Are you sure?"

"You can bet your sweet life I'm sure."

"Wasn't he mixed up with your French counterfeiting gang?"

"Yes, he was. He did five years for that in Sing Sing prison."

"There's another Swipes in existence now. He might be anywhere from eighteen to forty years old—short, spare, broad, strong as a moose, yellow hair, white eyelashes, black eyes like a ferret—"

"Hold on. That's enough. Old Swipes to a dot."

"Then this one is his son."

"Without a doubt."

"Well, that is point four, for it was Swipes who assaulted Patsy, and it was Swipes who abducted little Pommery Sec. Swipes was a pal of Jean Bouvier, and Swipes bosses the barge or steam canal boat called the *Jolly Drovers*, that has business up the river near Nyack. Her captain is a Dutchman named Hans Pretzel—"

"Hans Pretzel, eh? That's point five, Nick."

"How so?"

"Is he an enormous fellow, as big as a mountain and as quick as a cat with all his bigness?"

"I don't know. I haven't seen him—yet. I will to-morrow, though."

"Well, when you do see him, look out for him, for if he is the Hans Pretzel I mean he is a dangerous fellow, and the only one of the original gang you referred to who is left alive."

"Hans Pretzel, eh?" mused the inspector reminiscently. "Look out for him, Nick, for he's a bad one to the core."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SWIPES.

When Nick Carter parted with the inspector he had been given a thorough understanding of the location and general arrangement of the rock-bound retreat to which Pommery Sec had been taken.

Although he had never visited the place himself, and had, in fact, almost forgotten its existence, he was now, thanks to the courtesy of Inspector Byrnes, quite prepared to find it without difficulty; and already he had outlined three plans—three which worked together as one—for his descent upon the place.

Some idea has already been given the reader of the character and location of the place, but in order to understand the working out of the detective's plans a few more words on that subject is necessary.

Formerly there had been two entrances to the place, one through the upper fissure, which descended from the top of the bluff, and another through the lower fissure, from a ledge of rocks which jutted out almost over the water of the river, and which had been partially concealed from view from the river by boulders and brush that were arranged systematically for that specific purpose.

The years that had elapsed, however, between the raid made upon the place by Inspector Byrnes, when he was in office, and the present time, as well as the attempt to blow up the den, which had in truth been made and was supposed to have been accomplished by the sheriff of the county, had altered the conditions.

There was still an entrance from the top of the bluff, but where formerly it would accommodate many men at a time and afforded a means of flight for whoever happened to be in the den, supposing them to be attacked from the river side, it now was only wide enough for one person to work his way through, and that must be done very slowly and with great difficulty.

On the river side, where there had once been a precipitous path down the face of the bluff to the water, there was now only one way to gain admittance, and that was by means of a sling lowered with pulley and blocks, from the ledge above.

Hence, it followed that it was absolutely necessary that there should always be at least one man on guard within the place to lower the sling; for if one came to the den by way of the river and found then that he would have to enter by means of the upper fissure, he would be forced to travel around the bluff and back on the hills, a distance of three miles before he could get to the spot, which was really already within a very short distance away from him.

When Nick left the inspector he hurried at once to his own house, on Madison Avenue, and from there immediately dispatched Patsy Garvan on his errand to the corner where he was to await the coming of the little boy—Tommy Pond—who was to bring information of the arrival of Swipes at his home.

Now we happen to know that Swipes was at that very moment in the rock den of the palisades. We know that he was on the wharf ready to receive Pommery and convey him to the den above, and we have already seen how they were received.

But it appeared that Swipes had more than one means of conveyance to and from the headquarters of his men, and one of them was a swift launch which could take him across the river to a connection with the Hudson River Railroad, so that it was an easy matter for him to travel the distance between the city and the den within an hour.

And it so happened that this was precisely what he intended to do that very night.

When the men in the den got upon their feet and surged forward to take a look at the latest arrival and to comment upon his youthful appearance, et cetera, Swipes stated in a very few words the reason for Pommery's having been brought there.

"Listen to me, you," he said sharply, and in tones which while not loud, reached the ears of every man in the den.

"I sent this kid up here to-night because he is just now about the most valuable find we could make, if we can convince him on which side his bread is buttered, and make him realize that if he works with us he is safe, and that if he works against us he's got all through with life in this world.

"Now I'm going to tell you in a word or two who he is and what I want done.

"He's Philip Pommery, called Pommery Sec. He has managed to get next to our very dear friend, Nick Carter, and he is now working for Nick Carter."

Swipes was interrupted here by a howl of rage that went up as if by common consent from almost every man in the place.

Two or three of them actually started forward, as if they would seize upon the boy and crush him out of existence then and there, but Swipes stepped quickly between them and their intended victim and held up his hands warningly.

"Wait," he said calmly, "I've got something better than that to propose, and I haven't got time to talk about it now, for I must get across the river and back to New York about as quick as I can. I know you would all like to tear his heart out, and all that, just because he is a friend of Nick Carter, just as every man here is a sworn enemy of the detective and is pledged to do him an injury if he can; but there is a better way than the one you would follow."

"Give it to us," they shouted. "We want to hear it."

"Well, I want you to take good care of this kid until I get back here to-morrow night. See that he has all he wants to eat and drink; be good to him. When I get back to-morrow night he shall be made to join us and duly initiated into our order, or he will be cut up for bait, as Skinner suggested."

"Bully!" roared the gang.

"If he joins us and takes the oaths in due form we'll send him back into the city, and he shall return to work for Nick Carter; but he'll be working for us all the time, and we will then be forewarned of every move that the detective is to make.

"Now do you understand what I am up to? I want a spy in the enemy's camp. I want to know what Nick Carter is going to do before he does it—that is, as long as he is able to do anything at all.

"That's all, boys. Remember, you are to take good care of Pommery till I come to-morrow night. Such of you as have something doing for to-night can skip out now whenever you get ready, only I want you to arrange so that not less than five of you shall remain here with the kid.

"For those of you who go out, don't forget the reward."

"We won't."

"Five thousand dollars spot cash to the man who brings me satisfactory proof that Nick Carter is a dead one. Good night."

Swipes wheeled then, and faced Pommery.

"You heard what I have just said?" he asked.

"Sure. I ain't deaf."

"Well, you needn't do anything about it now, only think it over."

"I can do that."

"You have got twenty-four hours to do it in. You don't know much about me, do you?"

"Nothing, only that you are called the snake, behind, your back."

Swipes smiled.

"Do you know why I am called that?" he asked.

"No."

"Because I'm so cold-blooded. I'm going now. Remember if you decide to fall into my way of thinking, I'll line your clothes with money. If you don't, we'll cut you up for bait, and fish with you.

"Look here," said Swipes, as if struck with a good idea, "let me show you something."

He seized Pommery by one arm and pulled him across to one side of the den. There, he kicked aside a piece of carpet that covered something, disclosing a much mutilated naked human leg. Pointing down upon it, he said:

"That is all that is left of the last man who didn't believe me when I said we would cut him up for bait if he didn't agree. Good night."

* * * * *

When Nick returned to his home after leaving the inspector, and sent Patsy out on his errand, he remained quietly in his own quarters until after midnight, for he expected at every moment that the telephone would ring and that Patsy would inform him that Swipes was at home.

But it was one o'clock before the information was forthcoming, and then it was very unsatisfactory. Over the telephone, Patsy said:

"The kid has shown up. He says Swipes came in just now, but didn't stay but a minute. Then he went out again.

"The kid don't know where Swipes went, only he knows that Swipes won't come back again—at least not to-night. He never does when he goes out at this hour, and with the same bundle he carried to-night.

"I think," ventured Patsy, "from what the kid said in describing it, that the bundle contained burglar's tools."

"All right," replied Nick. "You can come home and go to bed now, Pat. I think I know where I can find Swipes."

Nick hung up the receiver and then gave considerable attention to the arrangement of his disguise, so that half an hour later when he went again upon the street, he exactly resembled an Italian organ grinder, who has been out for a holiday and is therefore unusually well dressed for one of his station.

Then he crossed the city to Eleventh Avenue and thence he started northward. Presently, after he had gone two or three blocks north of Thirty-fourth Street, he turned into a narrow alley between two buildings, and so on out into a yard behind them, thence through a gate in the wall, and thence along other alleys and through other gates, and so on across other yards by a turning, winding, devious way so involved in turnings that no person not thoroughly familiar with the route could have hoped to follow it even in the daylight, and at last passed through a door into a deserted building.

From there he descended, first a stairway, and finally a ladder, and then he traveled another winding distance through subcellars and foundations until at last he cautiously opened an iron door into a brilliantly lighted room—that is, it seemed to be lighted brilliantly after issuing from the black darkness of the subterranean route that the detective had been traveling.

A man stood at the door who barred his further prog-

CHAPTER IX.

THE FREIGHT OF THE "JOLLY DROVER."

ness, but Nick made a sign which he recognized, so that he stepped back at once and permitted the detective to pass.

The room was situated far below the street, was big and square, and was comfortably filled with men and women, who were smoking and drinking at tables around the place.

At one end of the room was a raised platform where there was a piano, and where even then somebody was delivering an execrable song; and there was a bar, and all the accompanying appurtenances of such a place—for the place was in reality that notorious resort of a few years ago, known as Crook's Dive.

When Nick entered the place, he paused an instant to accustom his eyes to the light, and then swept his glance hurriedly around the room.

Almost at once he discovered Swipes, who was seated at a table near the center of the room, in company with three others, and they were talking together very earnestly in whispers.

Nick approached the table where they were seated, and having arrived at a point near enough so that by putting out one hand he could have touched Swipes, he stood like a statue, waiting for one of the four men to discover and speak to him.

Nor did he have to wait long, for Swipes himself soon discovered the supposed Italian standing at his shoulder.

"Well? What the devil do you want, Italy?" he demanded roughly.

"Me wanta Signore Swipe. Iss data you?" replied Nick imperturbably.

"Yes, I'm Swipes. What do you want? I'm busy. Speak quick, dago."

"Man wanta you outside. Senta me in. Say if you no wanta come, say Bill Bower wanta you. Say twoa men dere. Manglea Compton anda Billa Bower. Saya more if you wanta."

"Bill Bower and Mangle Compton from the dock, eh? What do they want?"

The Italian shrugged his shoulders.

"Wanta you," he said. "Now. Bouta boat; bouta boy. Bouta detective man. Bouta devil to pay fora bot wine—fora Pommery. Say you know. Me no know anything bouta."

Swipes turned to his companions.

"Must be something in this," he said, "for the dago couldn't know what he is talking about unless the men he has named told him. I'll go out with him. You wait here. Where are they, Italy?" he added, rising from his place at the table.

"Me show you. Come," replied Nick, and, turning, he led the way across the smoke-laden room among the maze of tables and through the door into the darkness without.

Inside Crook's Dive, the three men who had been seated at the table with Swipes, waited, and waited vainly, for his return; but he did not return; and when the gray dawn of morning began to chase away the shadows of night from the streets of the city, the denizens of Crook's Dive stole away one by one to their lairs, like the rodents they were.

But Swipes did not come back, and if the three men who awaited him could have known that the supposed dago was really Nick Carter in disguise, they might have guessed why he did not return to them.

When the *Jolly Drovers* was tied to the wharf in the East River the following afternoon, and the round, fat figure of Hans Pretzel rolled forward from the stern toward the bow, almost the first face that his vision rested upon, was the unpleasant and wizened physiognomy of the gifted Swipes.

It was evident that Hans had not in the least expected to see his boss there at that time, for he stopped and began to chuckle audibly, so that the fat on his body was shaken like a barrel of jelly.

"Vell, vell, vell!" he said. "Dot leetle baby boy vot I raised mit so much care haf realy coomed down by der boat to see his Uncle Hans, ain'd it?"

Swipes made no response in words, but he scowled, and leaping aboard the boat, hurried aft toward the cabin, with Hans rolling after him as quick as a cat, notwithstanding his huge bulk.

"Mine leetle poy is cross, hey?" he asked, when they paused together near the hatch; and for answer, Swipes opened his mouth slightly and pointed with one finger, as if to indicate that three of his front teeth were missing—and Hans, who really only got a glance at the spot, believed that they were.

"Haf you been fitting?" he asked, with a leer and a grin; and Swipes nodded.

"Und did the oder feller knock dot sweetness voice out off you, as vell as your teeth?" he asked again; and again Swipes nodded; but this time he added, in a half-muffled tone, as if it gave him great pain to speak even the few words that he uttered: "A'most, Hans."

"By Chimminy!" exclaimed Hans. And he slapped his huge thigh and burst into laughter—and he continued to laugh until he was suddenly brought to himself by a thump in the belly that made him grunt.

Then the laugh turned to a roar of rage, and his huge arm shot out like a battering-ram, and if the blow he struck at the head of his companion had landed, the man whom he supposed to be Swipes would have been put to sleep then and there. But it did not land, and, seeing that, Hans broke into another laugh.

"Vell," he said presently, "I'm glad I didn't hit you. Now vot? Who are de mens on de dock mit you?"

"They're all right," replied Swipes, speaking thickly and leading the way into the cabin. "I've got some freight for you to take up the Hudson with you this afternoon, Hans."

"Yah. Freight. Dot iss right, Schvipes. Ven vill it be here already? Hey?"

"At three o'clock."

"Vot iss it?"

"Dry goods. Some wine. Some glassware. Some other things."

"Not too mooch, hey? Do boxes not too heafy, are they, hey?"

"No."

"Vell; den ve start avay by four, hey?"

"Yes; and I'm going up with you."

"Goot! Und vot you do now—right avay—hey? Meppy you shay by de boat vile I go mit de town up for von halluf hour; hey?"

"Yes. Go ahead. Keep sober, though."

Hans did not wait for further permission, but started

toward the ladder and in another moment was out on the deck and halfway to the plank; and Swipes, following him as far as the hatch and watching him, saw him disappear beyond the end of the pier.

The two men who had accompanied Swipes to the dock were still standing where he had left them, and in response to a signal from him, they now clambered aboard the boat and hurried to the stern to where he was awaiting them.

"Where is the nigger?" asked one of them, and the voice sounded strangely like the voice of Nick Carter, while Swipes replied in a voice that was not at all like the one he had used in talking with Hans.

"He's forward, Nick. I saw him dive below through the forward hatch as soon as he had made the line fast. Hans is good for a full hour away, I think, so you will have plenty of time. Shall I go with you into the forward hold?"

"No. Patsy and I can handle the coon, I think. Come along, Patsy."

Swipes, as we will continue to call him, although we now know that he was not that individual, remained leaning against the hatch while Nick and Patsy, both disguised as middle-aged laborers, went rapidly toward the forward hatchway, and he watched them until they disappeared from sight.

Ten, fifteen, and at last twenty minutes passed, and he had started to walk toward the bow of the boat when the dusky figure of a negro appeared through the hatchway, and leaping upon the deck started toward him.

For just one brief instant he was not sure whether it was really the negro of whom the detective had gone in search, or the detective himself; but he was quickly reassured by a low and heavy laugh.

"It is all done," said Nick, now in the disguise of a negro—of the negro who had been in the hold. "Come down there a moment. I want you to compare us and decide if I will fill the bill. Inspector Byrnes told me that Hans is a sharp old fellow whose only weakness was rum."

"Well," said the pseudo Swipes, "that's what he is after now."

"Sure. He is safe to be so drunk that he won't know anybody, by the time he returns."

They disappeared through the hatch and presently returned leading the negro, handcuffed between them; and thus they walked with him up the dock. They returned in a few moments without him, having delivered him over to a policeman who was in waiting for that particular job.

At a little before three o'clock Hans returned, and he was very drunk.

He was so big, so wide, so ponderous, that it seemed impossible for him to stagger, and yet he did not walk straight, either. He seemed to tack, like a sailboat making way against the wind, and as he came down the pier he looked like a walking balloon.

By the time he had reached the boat, two teams drove upon the pier with trucks laden with barrels and boxes; and there were men on the trucks who immediately began loading the things they had brought upon the steam canal boat. Swipes sat near the cabin hatch looking on placidly and puffing at his cigar; Hans stood amidships, staring stupidly at the operations; and swearing incessantly, and the negro remained at the fore hatch, doing nothing. Patsy

was nowhere to be seen. It was evident that he had remained below out of sight, and intended to stay there until the boat was well on her way up the river, at least.

None of the barrels or boxes were lowered into the hold. Hans, in the only effort he made to interfere with the progress of affairs, ordered the negro to open the hatch for the purpose of lowering them, when they first began to come aboard, but Swipes stepped forward and said there were reasons why he wanted them kept upon the deck.

"Vell," said Hans, "if you want 'em on de deck, all righd," and then the loading proceeded.

It was all accomplished but the last one of the boxes, when four men came down the pier together and approached Hans, who immediately called each one of the men by name and began talking volubly with them.

While they were conversing, the negro managed to work his way along the deck past them until he was within whispering distance of Swipes; and then he said, in a low tone:

"They must be four members of the gang who want to ride up on the boat. We don't want them with us. I'd rather let them escape than to run the risk of that."

"All right," replied Swipes. "I'll see to it." Then, when the negro had returned to his post at the other end of the boat, he called out:

"Hans! Come here!"

Hans turned, started a moment in the direction of the voice as if to locate the speaker, and then, having laid his course, steered for it.

"Vell, Schvipes," he said, balancing himself ludicrously, "vat iss it?"

"Send those fellows about their business. I don't want them here."

"No? Vy? They sait dot you tolt 'em to go by de boat to-day. Dot's vot they vas hier for 'cos you tolt 'em."

"Well, I've changed my mind. Send 'em away. If they want to go up the river, they will have to take another route. They can't go by this boat."

"Vell," said Hans, slowly, "meppy dot iss all righd—meppy you know your own pishness de pest; I ain'd got noddings to say about dat, but Chon Giddings iss dere, und he say dot you tolt him last nighd at de Crook's Tive dot he und Shorty Quinn vas to bring de oder two fellers mit 'em to-day und go mit you by der boat, und—"

"Shut up," ordered the pseudo Swipes. "Go and tell them what I have said now. If they don't like it, tell 'em to try to come aboard without my permission and see what will happen. Somebody'll get hurt if they try that on."

Hans returned to obey the orders given him, and the negro and the white man, watching, could see angry gesticulations and hear a few high words; and once, one of the men called out in a loud and angry tone to Swipes; but he received no reply, and presently the four turned away and left the pier.

The barrels and boxes were all loaded on by that time, and soon the *Jolly Drower* was got under way. The lines were cast off and the tide carried her out into the river. The supposed negro went below to attend to the fire and work the engine, and Hans, still drunk, but with sense enough left to steer, took the wheel.

And so the bow of the *Jolly Drower* was headed down the East River toward the Battery, rounded it and swung into the North River, while the supposed Swipes still

smoked his cigar near the cabin hatchway and kept a wary eye upon the river craft, on old Hans at the wheel and upon the barrels and boxes which rested upon the deck.

A steam canal boat is not a racer; nevertheless the *Jolly Drower* made fairly good time, and she was soon well up in the Hudson River, hugging the Jersey shore and speeding on her way toward Nyack.

The afternoon light had faded into twilight when she passed Nyack, however, and it was quite dark, when, half an hour after that, she swung up against a low pier which had been built in the river so that it looked more like a mass of driftwood than anything else.

Neither was the pier intended to tie up to, for when the *Jolly Drower* swung against it, instead of making lines fast to the timbers, an anchor was dropped overboard forward and aft to hold her in place.

When the craft was thoroughly in place, Hans approached Swipes.

"Vell?" he said.

"Go ahead," ordered Swipes laconically.

"Do you want to hoost up de hull pishness; hey?"

"Yes. Now."

"Sehr good," said Hans, and he returned to his post at once and sounded five short, quick notes from the steam whistle.

CHAPTER X.

THE INTERRUPTED MEETING.

Following the tooting of the whistle, almost immediately there appeared over their heads the long arm of a derrick, and soon pulleys and blocks were working on the end of it.

Half a dozen men swung down with the tackle and the barrels and boxes were made fast to it, one after another, with marvelous expedition, so that in a very short space of time the decks of the boat were unlimbered, and everything that had been brought to the wharf in New York by the trucks, was raised and disappeared into the face of the cliff above the boat.

The man who was supposed to be Swipes went up before any of the freight was taken, and after that he directed operations from the top while Nick, as the negro, bossed things at the bottom.

Then, when the last of the boxes had been delivered and there was no more to send, and just as Hans was on the point of giving the signal for them to draw up the rope, Nick stepped up close behind him, and without a word of warning or a sound, delivered a straight-from-the-shoulder blow under the German's ear, which sent him in a heap to the deck, totally unconscious.

A low whistle brought Patsy from the forward hatch to his side instantly.

"Quick, Patsy!" he said. "It was a sort of a mean blow to strike the Dutchman, but there was no help for it this time. We haven't got any time to fool away."

Handcuffs were snapped upon the German's wrists; another pair was locked on his ankles, a gag was thrust into his mouth and securely fastened, and then he was tumbled unceremoniously down the hatch.

Already the men above were shaking the rope impatiently for the signal to hoist, and now Nick and Patsy both seized it and in another moment were drawn whirl-

ing into the air astride of the last box that was to be hoisted.

When they arrived at the ledge and the men there discovered that the negro who worked on the boat with Hans, and another person whom they did not know at all, had come up on the box, they would have been handled with little mercy had not Nick anticipated them at once.

"De boss done tole us to come up," said the detective, before any of the gang had a chance become violent.

"Rats! What does he want of you here?" demanded the man who would have prevented them from entering the cave. "And who is this fellow? We never saw him before."

"Call de boss," said Nick; and then he raised his voice and yelled: "Marse Swipes! Marse Swipes! come he' a minute, please."

A few words from Swipes served to arrange matters satisfactorily. The negro and Patsy were conducted into the interior of the cavern and given seats.

Then one by one the boxes were dragged into positions assigned by Swipes, who seemed to know exactly how he wanted things arranged; and then, as he approached the center of the place, where there was a raised platform, the men who were there, fifty of them at least, all arose to their feet and formed a circle around him. At the same moment one of the men led Pomery forward and with a jerk, brought him into position in front of Swipes.

"There he is, Swipes," said the man. "He's been fed and watered all right, as you ordered. To-morrow I'm going to use him for bait, 'cos you'll find that you can't never bring him around to-do the job that you have laid out for him."

Then a second man stepped forward.

"Shall we proceed with the regular order of business?" he asked.

"Yes," said Swipes; and he wondered what the regular order of business was, for he could not expect nor anticipate how directly that very order of business was to work into his own hands.

"Order!" shouted the man, who was known as Flash Light Skinner. "The Independent and Secret Order of Associated Crooks will now come to order. Observe the first rule, if you please. All those having arms of any kind concealed about their person will step forward and deposit them on the platform until after the meeting is over."

Fully a score of the men came forward and laid weapons of all kinds, from revolvers and knives to slung shots and brass knuckles, on the platform, and Nick and Patsy on the outer edge of the crowd, smiled when they saw that.

"Unfinished business and reports from other associations," continued Skinner. "Are there any reports to make?"

For a moment there was silence and then one of the members rose slowly to his feet.

"I suppose that is my duty," he said, "but I ain't got nothing to report for the reason that I ain't been outside of this place since the last meeting. 'Cause why? 'Cause I couldn't get out. But the Pickpockets' Union and the Second-story Easies have promised me that they would come in, as I told you last time. We've got now the Bank Burglars' Brotherhood, the House Breakers' Syndicate, which consists of three mobs in New York and one in Brooklyn, the—"

"Oh, forget all that!" called out somebody from the rear. "Tell us something new. We've heard all that before. The game's working all right. We've got our start. The other crooks'll be only too anxious to join in with us when they understand what we're doing."

"The only kickers I know about are John Giddings and Shorty Quinn's gang, and they only object to being under the orders of Swipes. I move that we proceed with what this here meeting is called for. We agreed between us less than a month ago that we would exterminate the whole Nick Carter outfit; and that is what we are most interested in just now. It stands to reason that that thing has got to be done before the Secret Order of Associated Crooks can amount to anything, because you all know as well as I know that Nick Carter'll git on our trail afore long, and then there'll be something doing. He came mighty near to knowing something when he rounded up Jean Bouvier in less than twenty-four hours after he got back to town. That of itself ought to teach you all a lesson."

"What I want to know is, what has been done and what is going to be done about exterminating the Nick Carter outfit. It didn't do us no kind of good to have that woman killed off, and I reckon it ain't done any more good to have this kid Pommerly brought up here to be toasted or roasted or whatever you propose to do with him. If one of you brave fellers had run a sticker into him and dropped him into the river, I'd 'a' said all right; do the same thing by his boss, but—"

"Shut up!" ordered Skinner. "Are you going to talk that way all night?"

"Well, Skinner, I'll allow that I'm going to talk that way till I'm through, and no bone-headed flash light like you are, is going to stop me, either. I ain't got much more to say, and what that little is, is this: I was going to say that I wish that Nick Carter was here instead of the kid, so's we could tell him what we think of him, and then we could trice him up against a post and roast him over a slow fire."

There was a moment of dead silence when he ceased speaking. This silence, however, was broken suddenly by a shrill whistle which seemed to come from every part of the cavern at once.

The members of the gang turned, as if by common consent, to ascertain whence came the whistle, and then there was a yell of rage from fifty throats, followed almost instantly by a dead silence.

One of the crooks—a desperate character—started to his feet and took one quick leap toward the platform where the weapons had been deposited, but the sharp crack of a rifle crashed through the cavern and the man threw up his arms and fell in his tracks.

What the crooks saw—the sight which called forth their simultaneous cry of rage when they turned at the sound of the whistle—was sixteen men drawn up in line surrounding them, and each of the sixteen held a Remington rifle in his hands, and that rifle was leveled straight at them.

And in the meantime, behind them, Swipes had smashed Skinner on the head with the butt of a pistol, and had quickly stepped forward over the weapons that were heaped upon the platform.

And then the negro came forward from the corner and stood facing them, smiling.

"You are up against it, boys," he said coolly. "The first one of you who attempts to lower his hands gets a

bullet through him, and no questions asked. This is a little party that we arranged for the meeting of the Secret Order of Associated Crooks.

"You can't blame anybody but yourselves," went on the negro, "because you hoisted every one of these central-office gentlemen up here on to tackle yourselves—and one of the boxes you were so eager to get, contained handcuffs and foot shackles for all of you."

"Four of them, who are particularly accomplished in the application of these little restrainers, will now proceed to fit the new jewelry upon you while the others keep you covered—and I wash up."

The groans and curses that filled the air about that time cannot be recorded, but nevertheless, in a very short space of time, so rapidly did the police headquarters detectives, whom Nick had brought with him as freight, do their work, every man of the sixty-eight who were assembled there was manacled and helpless.

In the meantime Nick had washed the black from his face with cocoa butter, and he had removed the kinky wig he had worn.

"Now, boys," he said, "Nick Carter is here, if anybody should ride up in an automobile to ask you about him. The meeting of the Secret Order of Associated Crooks will now adjourn without delay. It would seem that Swipes had fooled you, also."

They turned their heads in the direction of the platform, and then a general gasp of surprise went up from every pair of lips there.

Swipes had disappeared; but in his place, with a smile of pleasure on his face, was a face which many of them recognized—the face of Chick Carter.

Pommerly Sec flanked him on one side and Patsy Garvan, grinning to beat the band, was on the other.

"I reckon," said Pommerly, to the man who had wished for the presence of Nick Carter in order that he might be tied to a stake and roasted, "that when you want Nick Carter around so badly another time, you won't mention the fact quite so loud, will you?"

Nick gave a few hurried directions regarding the lowering of the prisoners into the *Jolly Drovers* and turned away, saying that he and Chick would descend to the boat to receive them as they came down.

He had taken three steps toward the ledge when an unforeseen incident occurred.

A huge body loomed above the edge of the cliff and with a spring, reached the top.

Then it pulled itself together and bounded forward like a rubber ball, so that in one second of time from the instant when Nick turned toward the ledge, he found himself seized and engaged in a deadly hand-to-hand struggle while it lasted—but it was short.

The huge arms of Hans shut themselves like iron bands around Nick Carter's neck and body, and the great weight of the big man was thrust down upon him as if to crush him to the earth.

For a moment it seemed as if Nick must succumb to the awful weight and gigantic strength of the big German; but then, by one of those supreme efforts which he rarely had to use, he pulled his own mammoth muscles into trim.

While the weight of the German seemed to be bearing him down, he was stooping still lower, and in a moment more he had raised himself erect, so that the German was lifted clear of the floor.

Then, the detective, with the huge man almost on his shoulders, started almost on a run toward the edge of the ledge, and when he arrived almost there, he halted with the same suddenness as if he had collided with an impassable barrier.

The shock of that halt was too much for the equilibrium of the German.

He shot into the air over Nick's head, dropped upon the very edge of the rock, and then, with a cry that rang through the cavern so that all remembered it, he rolled off into the abyss beneath.

So ends the story of the meeting of the Independent and Secret Order of Associated Crooks in the cavern that had once been occupied by the French counterfeiters, years before.

Swipes was, of course, already a prisoner in the house of the detective in New York. He had fallen so readily into the trap laid for him at Crook's Dive that he was captured with little trouble.

Pete Morgan and Chris Conners were among the prisoners taken at the den in the bluff, and they went with the others to prison; and Pommery was sent the next day to look up little Tommy Pond and to arrange for him to go to a good school where he could have the advantage that his courage and his sagacity had earned for him, at the hands of Nick Carter. We will hear from Tommy Pond later, for although he was only nine years old when this event happened, he lived to take part in many that were greater.

It is worth while adding that while Hans Pretzel fell a great distance and struck upon jagged rocks at the bottom, he was not killed. He was taken to a hospital in New York, and left there to be cured.

THE END.

The profession of Nicholas Carter has carried him to almost every crook and corner of this earth, from the mysterious and romantic St. Petersburg to the dread and relentless fastnesses of Siberia, from New York, his home city—"home city" only in that his place of residence is located there, for the great detective, a master of almost every tongue, is at home anywhere he may happen to be—to the great, silent forests of Canada, where he has run down many a noted evildoer.

It will, therefore, be a pleasant announcement to you that you will find Nick Carter working against and for some strange people in the story that you will find in the next issue of this weekly, No. 55, out September 27th, entitled "The Golden Hair Clew; or, Nick Carter's Mystic Puzzle." The story is the first of a series of three that will deal with the detective's work among a mysterious people, work that will not only require his presence in New York, but also in the strange country where these mysterious people and their ancestors have lived for many centuries, unknown to the world. Let no lover of a good detective story fail to read "The Golden Hair Clew."

PROFITABLE LEAD MINES.

It is a common remark that a gold or silver mine is generally the least productive to the workers, and a lead mine the most. This seems singular at first glance; but when all the circumstances are considered, the saying proves true, and the hazard in speculating in obtaining the

precious metals from the bowels of the earth becomes the more apparent. The quantity of silver and other metals extracted from lead adds materially to the profits of lead mines, and makes adventurers more willing to embark capital in these undertakings.

A PAPER GOLD MINE.

Or, Sheridan Keene After Money-order Book 2409.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Several books of blank money orders are stolen from the safe in the post office at M—. One of them is filled out and cashed by the firm of Ray & Brett for a man who acted the part of a farmer. Detective Sheridan Keene, who is assigned to the case from the Boston detective bureau, suspects that this man is a notoriously clever crook, Johnny Guile. Keene visits the post office at M—, and discovers that whoever stole the money-order blanks also used the official rubber stamp, which has a slight defect, or had it used for him, in stamping the blanks. Keene suspects the money-order clerk, Nellie Harvey, knows more about the missing blanks than she is willing to admit.

Having gained sufficient evidence to warrant the arrest of Miss Harvey as the guilty person in the case, Keene attempts to do so, but the young woman turns out to be Johnny Guile in disguise, who escapes.

CHAPTER VI.

KEENE SCORES A POINT.

Despite his haste and discomfort, Sheridan Keene would not depart in pursuit of Johnny Guile until he had released Mrs. Cabot. This required only a few moments, and her story was quickly told.

The moment she had entered the chamber with the notorious young swindler, he had unceremoniously thrust a revolver under her nose, and threatened her life then and there unless she remained perfectly quiet and obeyed him. As a matter of fact she had been too terrified to do otherwise, and had quietly submitted to being bound and gagged, in which condition the detective had discovered her.

"Have you at any time suspected your boarder to be a man, Mrs. Cabot?" Keene sternly demanded, when she had finished.

The poor woman protested her entire ignorance of anything pertaining to Johnny Guile, and as there then was nothing to be gained by remaining, Keene called his companion from the back yard and they departed together.

"We shall find your team somewhere below here," he assured the young man, who appeared rather disturbed over the theft and the unexpected turn of affairs.

"I hope so, sir, I am sure," he said half doubtfully.

"There is no doubt about it," Keene replied. "The shrewd scamp will not chance driving very far, lest an alarm is telephoned in all directions. It is easier to catch a man with a team in these days than a man without one. I feel less riled over my infernal blunder, since I have discovered the criminal to be Johnny Guile. He is known all over the country for his exceeding cleverness, and if I for a moment had dreamed that he was the chap in that auburn wig, he'd have had bracelets on long ago."

"Do you think you now will be able to run him down?"

"I don't think at all about it; I know!" was the reply, with grim austerity. "I will run him down for this little caper, my man, or I'll throw up my commission at the end of the year."

"Have you any idea in what direction he will head?"

"Not the slightest," growled Keene, "but I have an idea where I can lay my hands on one of his confederates, and I'll make it a point to have him in bracelets before the sun sets."

"If you can do that, and force him to turn State's evidence, sir, it might be turned to account."

"We shall see," Keene simply rejoined, yet in a way that spoke louder than words.

He proved to be right about the stolen team. At the end of a half hour they located it in one of the side streets, left deserted at the curbing.

Inquiries in the immediate neighborhood resulted in nothing of importance, however; for no person could be found who had seen Johnny Guile leave the team, nor who was able to state in what direction he had gone.

Sheridan Keene delayed in M— only long enough to remunerate the young man for the use of his time and team, and then hastened to the railway station and boarded the first train into Boston.

Without waiting even to visit the headquarters in Pemberton Square, he consulted a train schedule in the Union station, and having snatched a hasty lunch he took the one-o'clock train to Salem.

It was in this city that he had heard Johnny Guile instruct his confederate to await a letter, and the mission of the detective may be easily conjectured.

It was about two o'clock when he entered the Salem post office, and he made his entrance by a side door which led to the interior of the department.

"I wish to see the postmaster at once," he explained to one of the clerks, who showed an inclination to stop him.

The detective's authoritative manner was not without effect, however, and the clerk led him to the door of a small room off the mailing department.

"There is a gentleman here to see you, sir," he said to the postmaster.

The latter, who was seated at a desk, looked up inquiringly at the detective.

Keene immediately displayed his badge and stated his mission, when he was at once more cordially received.

"I had a warning card only this morning, relative to the books stolen from the M— office," the postmaster now said genially. "It is a very serious theft. In what way can I be of service to you?"

"The real thief was one Johnny Guile," replied Keene, who had not imparted his recent humiliating experience. "I am unable to locate him just at present, but I am very sure that one of his confederates is here in Salem, and that he will call at this office for a letter, if he has not already done so and received it."

"What is the man's name, Detective Keene? We easily can see if there is a letter here addressed to him."

"I am working under many difficulties, sir," replied Keene, with a significant shrug of his broad shoulders. "I do not know the man's name."

"That is unfortunate."

"Yes, decidedly so."

"Can you describe him?"

"Yes, quite accurately."

"Well, that may help."

"He is a young man, I should say about thirty-five years old, of medium height—"

"Wait one moment, inspector!" interposed the postmaster, abruptly rising. "Let's go out and see the general-delivery clerk. You can describe the man to him, also; and if the party you suspect has already been here, my clerk may recall him from your description, and will, perhaps, remember the fellow's name."

"A good idea!" exclaimed Keene.

And they crossed the mailing department together, and joined the young man clerk at the general-delivery window.

In a few words the postmaster introduced the detective, and explained the latter's business there.

"Now tax your memory, Harry," he added, to the clerk; "and see if you can recall any applicant for a letter to-day who would answer the description which Detective Keene will give you."

"I'll do my best, sir," replied the clerk.

He stepped a little aside from the window, which was closed in on both sides by the general-delivery boxes, which hid the three men from view of any person in the public office outside.

"Angels can only do their best," smiled Keene, in response to the clerk's words.

"What style of man have you in mind, sir?"

"A very ordinary type," laughed Keene. "He is about thirty-five years old, of medium height, but quite solidly set up. His features are distinctly Irish, with a stubby nose, gray eyes, and a large mouth. When I last saw him, which was in the early part of last evening, he wore a brown plaid coat and vest, a pair of striped trousers, a brown derby hat, and a—"

"Good God!" suddenly exclaimed the postmaster, scarce above his breath. "Isn't this the very man, Detective Keene?"

He had caught sight of Malloy, indeed, who at that moment was entering the public office to ask for the letter he was expecting to receive from Johnny Guile.

He came so quickly to the window that Keene had no opportunity for concealing himself, and as the detective swung round to look at the man, whom he quickly recognized, Malloy's eyes fell also upon Sheridan Keene.

Instantly the scamp recognized in him the man he had observed following Johnny Guile in M— the previous afternoon, when the latter warned him to get out of sight. His features changed like a flash, and at once betrayed his impulse to turn about and run.

He drew back a step or two, hesitating for the fraction of a second—and then Sheridan Keene, with a single bound, had reached the counter.

Snatching out his revolver he leaned through the delivery window, thrusting his weapon almost into Malloy's startled face, and cried, with terrible sternness:

"Stand where you are, sir! If you move a hair, I'll drop you dead!"

Some of his earlier disappointment sounded in the detective's threatening voice, yet Malloy had the nerve to grasp a rather desperate opportunity which the situation afforded.

A young, well-dressed lady was just closing one of the lock boxes less than two feet from where the criminal was standing.

These two persons were the only ones in the outer office.

With a movement as quick as that of a cat, Malloy sprang behind the lady and seized her roughly by both arms. Using her as a shield for himself, while piercing cries of fright rose from the startled woman's lips, the ruffian forced her violently toward the street door.

"Stop!" shouted Keene, from the window. "Stop or I'll fire!"

"Go ahead and fire," yelled Malloy, crouching behind the helpless woman and dragging her after him.

In another moment he had gained the threshold of the street door, while Keene was absolutely prevented from taking the desperate chance of a shot at him. Then giving the half-fainting woman a shove in the direction of the detective, the daring scoundrel sprang through the office door and dashed up the street.

But the postmaster and his clerk, who before this had taken in the requirements of the startling situation, were close upon Malloy's heels.

Sheridan Keene dashed through the mailing department and out by the street door. It seemed to him, as he ran, that this day was for him a red-letter day of mishaps and disappointments.

When he reached the front street, however, his feelings underwent an agreeable change. Upon the sidewalk fifty yards away, three men were lying almost prostrate in a struggle which gave new color to the probable culmination of the affair. Rushing to the spot, Keene also took a hand, and in far less time than is required to write it, Terry Malloy was standing pale, panting, and humiliated on the sidewalk, with a pair of handcuffs securely on his wrists.

Fortunately the episode had been of only brief duration, and was witnessed only by a few persons; and Sheridan Keene, who subsequently found it very desirable to keep the fact of the arrest from the knowledge of Johnny Guile, had no difficulty in suppressing the news and preventing its publication by the local press.

Rather the worse in appearance for his rough handling, Terry Malloy was ignominiously conducted back to the Salem post office, and seated in a chair in the postmaster's private room.

"Now, my man, the sooner you make a clean breast of it, the better it will be for you," Keene sternly said, when they had the rascal well under cover, and the door closed against chance observers. "What is your name?"

"If you don't find out till I tell you, sure it will be many a day," replied Malloy, with dogged surliness.

"Just as you like about it," returned Keene, with a display of grim indifference. "But make sure of one fact, my man, the more trouble you cause, the longer time you'll do for it."

"I can only get the limit for a crime, whatever it is you think you've got me for."

"We don't think anything about it," my man. We know what we have you for."

"Then you know more'n I do."

"Is that so. Perhaps you've forgotten meeting Johnny Guile in M— yesterday, and of going to his room in the evening. You didn't hear Johnny Guile threaten to do Sheridan Keene up for good and all, before he should corner your paper gold mine, did you? You crooks are very bold and clever till you find yourselves with bracelets

on and in a corner, and then your memory forsakes you. But I'll find a way to bring it back into your thick head, my man. Just look over your general-delivery letters out there, Harry, and see if you can find any post marked from M—. If you find one, bring it to me."

The voice and manner now assumed by Sheridan Keene were those which speedily bring most of these baffled malefactors to abject terms. About the best and boldest of them will knuckle when a prison cell stares them in the face, and will resort even to treachery and betrayal of their confederates, in the hope of escaping a sentence.

And Terry Malloy, who was far from being the best and boldest, now underwent a change.

"See here, inspector," he cried, starting up in his chair. "D'ye mean to tell me Johnny Guile has been taken?"

"I am not telling you anything, my man. It is you who must tell me," said Keene sternly. "If you are ready to open your mouth, do so. If not, you may keep it closed."

"You won't say whether Johnny Guile's been taken?" demanded Malloy, with an angry scowl.

"No, sir."

"Then hang me if I'll open my mouth till you do!"

"It's your privilege to keep it closed."

"Here is a letter postmarked from M— this morning, sir," said the office clerk, now hurriedly returning.

"Let me see it."

"It is addressed to—"

"Stop!" interrupted Keene, taking the letter and glancing at the superscription. "Yes, this is the one, my boy. As a matter of fact, I am becoming quite familiar with the flowing chirography of clever Johnny Guile. Now what do you say, my man? Will you speak out, or not?"

"Devil a word will you get out of me!"

"All right, Mr. Terrance Malloy," returned Keene, reading with grim satisfaction the address upon the letter in his hand. "We'll see what Johnny Guile has written you from M—."

And without a moment's hesitation, Keene broke the seal and read the contents of the sheet inclosed.

It read as follows:

"DEAR TERRY: That infernal Keene has made it too warm to remain here in the post office, and I shall shake my skirts to-day and join Bill. You lay low in Salem until Friday, and then come and meet us. We shall try working a few of the money orders in local places, until we have made a sufficient raise to vamoose, when we had better start West.

"Bill will meet you at Riley's Friday noon. I shall keep under cover, or work the Reuben, for Keene is making it too warm for me to run about in the open. Don't keep Bill waiting. Friday noon, sure! JOHNNY."

Keene folded the letter and thrust it into his pocket.

Again his manner brought a fit of weakness over the man opposite.

"See here, inspector," he cried, leaning forward in his chair, with the manacles jingling between his knees; "what do I get if I squeal?"

"I shall make no terms with you, Malloy," replied Keene. "I already have the game well in hand."

"Don't I get anything for splitting?" cried Malloy desperately.

"I'll report the fact when you are brought before the

court," Keene answered shortly. "That is the best bid I'll make you."

"What do you want to know?"

"Where is Riley's?" demanded Keene, now satisfied that the fellow was weakening.

"What Riley's?"

"Where you might go to meet Bill? Don't beat the bush with me, Malloy, if you mean business."

"It's a gin mill in Lynn," replied Malloy, glaring at Keene with grim and sullen eyes.

"What street?"

"Market Street."

"And who is Bill?"

"His name is Bill Baker."

"Don't he live in Lynn?"

"No; he comes from Pittsburg."

"Do you know where he lodges in Lynn?"

Malloy shook his head.

"I've not been in Lynn at all yet," he replied. "I'd not know where to look for him."

"How did you know about Riley's, if you have never been in Lynn?"

"I have the address in my vest."

"Has Baker got the stolen money-order books?"

"He had them the last I knew."

"How many are there in your gang?"

"Only three, me and Johnny and Baker."

The fellow's responses convinced Keene that he was telling very nearly the truth, and he had learned all that he then required.

"That's all for the present, Malloy," he said bluntly. "Now pull yourself together, and we will take a ride into town."

Keene delayed his departure only to arrange with the postmaster to insure the suppression of the news of Malloy's arrest, then took his man into Boston.

He proved to be as good as his word given his acquaintance of the early morning. Before sunset, Johnny Guile's confederate was lodged in the Tombs.

CHAPTER VII.

KEENE SCORES A POINT.

"Too many cooks may spoil the broth," said Chief Watts that evening, after Terrance Malloy had been safely lodged in jail.

"Why so, chief?" inquired Keene, who had but recently returned from the Tombs, and had just made an official report of his day's work.

"Because if those two rascals are in Lynn, and likely to remain there until Friday, of which there seems no reasonable doubt, it will not do to start the whole police force of Lynn in search of them, like a pack of hounds after a pair of rabbits."

"The larger the pack the louder the bark," said Keene, seeing at once what Chief Watts was driving at.

"That is true," nodded the latter.

"And Johnny Guile, from what I have seen of him, appears to be too clever by far to be easily caught napping," laughed Keene, with a rather significant grimace.

"True again. It is safe enough that he will constantly have an eye upon the doings of the local police, and immediate activity on their part will at once alarm him, and possibly drive him to seeking cover elsewhere."

"That means, good-by, Johnny; and good-by, money orders; for a time, at least."

"It must be prevented," rejoined Chief Watts decisively; "and both of these scamps must be taken into camp with this opportunity. It is too good a one to be lost."

"I think so, chief."

"But you had better attempt it on the quiet," continued Chief Watts. "Instead of getting help from the Lynn officers, some of whom may be personally known to Guile or his confederates, you had better take from here what officers you'll require."

"I shall not need more than two, I think."

"Take Raymond and Merton. They both are good men for this kind of a job."

"Are they about here?"

"You can easily locate them. I think Merton came in a few minutes ago."

"Have you any instructions?"

"I think not," replied Chief Watts, turning to his desk. "The case is hardly one requiring further instructions. I leave to you the methods by which these fellows best can be secured, which naturally will depend upon incidental circumstances. You had better take your officers with you, and go down to Lynn to-night."

"Very well, sir," bowed Keene, rising to go.

It was Wednesday when Terry Malloy was arrested and lodged in jail, and although Keene and his two companions kept a close watch in Lynn during all of Thursday, not a trace of Johnny Guile nor of a man answering Baker's description, could be found.

Keene had adopted a disguise to prevent being recognized by Guile, should he be observed upon the street; but both of his assistants took it for granted that they were not personally known.

On Friday morning Keene made a call upon the Lynn postmaster, and learned that no less than three of the local merchants had the previous day been victimized by the fraudulent money orders, and that two cases had been reported from Maplewood and Saugus.

These facts indicated beyond reasonable doubt that the arrest of Malloy was not suspected by Johnny Guile, and that the latter was assiduously plying his infamous vocation, probably in an effort to raise funds by which he and his confederate could escape to another part of the country.

"Have you seen any of the parties upon whom these money orders were imposed?" Keene inquired of the Lynn postmaster.

"Only Mr. May, the stove man," was the reply. "I was not here when the others called."

"Did Mr. May give you any description of the swindler?"

"He described him as being a plainly dressed man, apparently about forty years old, and who claimed to be a farmer from Hampton."

Keene smiled significantly.

"That was Johnny Guile fast enough."

"You think he is working this job in disguise?"

"There is no doubt about it, sir," replied Keene. "He knows well enough that a description of him is out, and he will take no chance of appearing on the street in his true character. It is very evident that he is short of ready money, and has been working this venture solely for the purpose of getting funds with which to depart."

"It would appear so, certainly."

"I think we shall have him in custody before night, however," rejoined Keene, as he turned to go. "If any stranger presents one of the orders at your window, have him arrested at once upon suspicion, and hold him until he can be fully identified."

"I'll do that, surely."

"There is a bare chance," added Keene, "that they will attempt to work even the post office."

"I'll be ready for them if they do."

It then was about ten o'clock in the morning, and noon was the hour appointed by Johnny Guile to meet Malloy and Bill Baker.

Leaving the post office, Keene immediately returned to his hotel and rejoined his two companions.

"The scamps have been at work under our very eyes!" he exclaimed, on entering their room.

"You don't mean it."

"Nothing else. Half a dozen orders already have been turned into cash, and we must work sharp to make an arrest before the scoundrels can leave. If we fail at Riley's we are done up for a time, surely."

"What plan have you in mind?"

"One which I think may be successfully worked," Keene rejoined. "I shall attempt to make Baker my dupe, and through him locate Johnny Guile."

"In what way?"

"By getting Baker to take me to their lodgings. I shall probably require help to land both of them, and shall expect both of you to be near enough to aid me, if it comes to a tough scrap."

"We'll be on hand, Keene; you may rest easy on that score."

"Keep in the background, however, until you get some sign from me," cautioned the detective. "If you see me leave Riley's in company with a man, follow us and be guided by circumstances. You'll know that I, at least, have made a favorable impression upon him, and probably am starting for a meeting with Johnny Guile."

While further describing his plan of operation, Sheridan Keene made a careful change in his personal appearance.

At the end of a half hour he had made himself up as a common, tough-looking type of young man, clad in cheap, threadbare clothes, and with a countenance presenting all the signs of recent dissipation.

These preparations having been made, he slipped a revolver into each of his hip pockets, and was ready for the work.

At about half past eleven he entered Riley's saloon on Market Street, and approached the bar, purchasing a glass of beer, which he took to one of the side tables, together with a sandwich. The latter he ate, but the beer he disposed of in a cuspidor, wishing to have a perfectly clear head for the work he instinctively felt was before him.

The saloon was a commodious one and well patronized, and the fact that he remained hanging about the place occasioned no notice.

The clock on the wall indicated the hour of twelve before any man answering Baker's description, as it had been recently given by Malloy, put in an appearance.

At precisely twelve, however, a solidly built man of nearly fifty, with dark eyes and a heavy black mustache, entered the saloon. He was ordinarily dressed and appeared like a business man.

The moment Keene saw him, he recognized him as the party treacherously described by Malloy.

"Now, then, the work begins," he said to himself.

He glanced toward the open door leading to the street. Inspector Merton was standing on the curb of the sidewalk, with his back toward the saloon door, and his hands thrust into his pockets.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE HARPOON DUEL.

A TALE OF THE SEA.

By Roger Sturbeck.

As I was rolling through South Street, my head came into contact with the head of another person, whereupon this individual exclaimed:

"Blast it, shipmate, you've stoven my figurehead this time!"

The face before me, embrowned by the sun and storm, struck me as strangely familiar. The form was trim and taut as a bowline, with broad shoulders, deep chest, and hips that were rounded off like the run of a clipper. The dress consisted of wide blue trousers, blue pants, and a jacket of the same hue, with a wide collar, having a star on each shoulder.

My apology was cut short. The young man-o'-war's man suddenly threw his arms around me, and hugged me so tight that my bones began to crack.

"My old chum, Starbuck!" he shouted, "don't you remember me—Will Warlock—your shipmate in the *Vulcan*!"

I did remember him now, and was overjoyed to see him, so we went into a saloon to talk over old times.

When he took off his tarpaulin I noticed a livid scar upon the forehead. He perceived that I remarked it, and said:

"It's an honorable scar, Starbuck, and I'm not ashamed of it!"

I did not doubt that, in the least, and at my request he explained it with the following yarn:

"About the latter part of March, in the year 1861, finding myself tired of the merchant service, I concluded to try my hand at whaling, for the sake of variety. So I shipped in the bark *Norman*, of New Bedford. We were soon out at sea, and squared away, with a fair wind for the Western Islands. While here we first learned of the capture of Fort Sumpter, and the intense excitement with which that event had fired the hearts of North and South. Captain G—, of our vessel, was a Massachusetts man, and with the patriotic enthusiasm of his countrymen, he immediately gathered all the American flags he could find in the ship, and soon had them floating all over the vessel. They hung streaming from the gaff, the halyards of the fore, main, and mizzen, and even from the end of the fly-jib boom.

"The captain's daughter, Annie G—, who was accompanying her father on the voyage, wore a miniature flag, worked in silk by her own delicate fingers, upon the bosom of her dress. Soon after we had left the Western Islands, the captain called all hands aft, and Annie made her appearance, with her silk apron full of Union rosettes, prepared by herself, which she began to distribute to the men. She was a very lovely girl of about the medium height, was well formed, with large, soft blue eyes, and dark-brown

hair, of a golden tinge, which last was braided in a very tasteful manner at the back of her head. She smiled from one to the other; and when it came my turn, she did not merely place the article in my hand, but stopped in front of me and pinned it to my jacket. Her face was so close to mine that I could feel her warm breath upon my cheek. I would have given all the world to have pressed my lips to her fingers, which were so white and tapering, and had such beautiful rosy nails on the ends of them. But I didn't like to do it, for, although I had often spoken to her, and she had even loaned me books to read, I would not for the world have had her suppose I wished to insult her.

"Every man received his gift with pleasure, and thanked her—every man, with the exception of a tall, dark fellow named Jack Roll, who had already rendered himself obnoxious to the men by his blustering ways and quarrelsome manner. When Annie extended the rosette to him, he scowled, and roughly exclaimed:

"Blast the thing, I don't want it! Take it away!"

"Annie shrank back at this rough address, and was withdrawing her hand when the fellow snatched the rosette from her fingers and threw it overboard.

"I was in front of him in a moment, with my hand upon his throat.

"Villain! I roared, 'apologize this instant, or—'

"I was cut short by a blow on my temple, from the giant's fist, which knocked me to the deck, but regaining my feet in a moment, I struck him a heavy blow between the eyes which caused him to reel over like a drunken man. But two soft hands were now laid upon my arm, and a pale, sweet face, lifted pleadingly to my own.

"For my sake," murmured the soft voice of Annie; 'for my sake, Will, don't, I beg of you, get yourself into a quarrel. It's no matter, I don't mind what he said.'

"The captain was perfectly livid with rage, and, calling his mates to his aid, soon had the fellow handcuffed and conveyed to the run.

"Coward! hissed Jack Roll, as they were forcing him past me. 'If ever I meet you on fair ground I'll pay you for this!'

"I am ready for you at any time after you are free," I answered quietly.

"You are not! You dare not give me a fair fight!" he roared. "You fear me! You are a coward!"

"My blood fairly boiled at this taunt, and although I made no reply, I mentally vowed that I would make that man eat his own words at some future time, or that one or the other of us should bite the dust—before we parted when next we met.

"The captain proposed to have the man tied up in the rigging and flogged, but Annie begged so hard of her father not to perform the act, that he finally relinquished the idea.

"Although closely confined in the run, Jack Roll received his rations daily, and, if we except the fact of his being a prisoner, was just as comfortable as would have been the case had he remained in the forecabin.

"The *Norman* was a fast sailer, and we had good weather until we found ourselves in the latitude of the Florida coast. Then a heavy gale of wind caused us to take in everything but a close-reefed main-top-sail and topmast stay-sail. The gale drove us in close proximity to the Bahamas, and one morning—it had cleared up by this

time—we found ourselves opposite a low, rocky isle, of small dimensions upon the weather bow.

"Back the main-yard!—we were running along close hauled at the time—"and lower away the larboard boat!" ordered the captain.

"Although some surprise was evinced at this command, it was executed promptly, and the boat was soon in the water.

"The captain now ordered a bag of crackers, some meat, and a keg of fresh water to be placed in the stern sheets. As I was the harpooner of the larboard boat I asked the captain if I should take out the irons.

"Never mind," he answered.

The first and second mates made their appearance on deck with the prisoner.

"We now divined the captain's intentions. He was going to have Jack Roll set ashore on the island.

"Get into the boat," he said to Roll.

"The latter obeyed, scowling upon me as he did so.

"Coward!" he muttered, 'you will escape me, after all!'

"You need not come with us," said the mate, addressing me, as he stepped into the boat, after the crew had taken their places.

"Captain!" I exclaimed, as the latter looked over the rail, 'I would give a hundred thousand dollars, if I had it, to take charge of this boat, on the present occasion.'

"The skipper seemed a little surprised at my earnestness, but, nevertheless, informed me that I might do so.

"There is no need that both of you should go, however," he continued. "You may come out, Mr. Reskett."

"The mate resigned the steering gear to my hands, and ascended to the deck. I felt exultant, and, giving the order to the men, made the boat fly. Her keel was soon upon the island beach. The prisoner jumped out. I followed him.

"Now," I cried, 'Jack Roll! Now is our time. You have insulted the captain's daughter. You have called me a coward, and I am determined to have satisfaction!'

"A savage light flashed in the eyes of Roll.

"You shall have it, lad!" he exclaimed, rolling his sleeves up over his brawny arms.

"A fight! a fight!" shouted the men, in high spirits, as they came to the spot.

"Pshaw!" suddenly exclaimed Jack Roll, 'this will merely be child's play! Why not fight with these?' and he pointed to the harpoons in the boat.

"Any way you like!" I answered.

"Jack Roll moved to the boat, and selected one of the best irons he could find. I did the same.

"A bully fight!" exclaimed the sailors. 'A duel with harpoons!'

"One man wished to interfere, but he was overruled by the rest.

The distance—thirty paces—was soon selected, and at the word 'ready,' pronounced by one of the men, we were to commence operations. My antagonist seemed eager for the fray, nor was I less impatient than himself.

"At length the signal was given, and the weapon of each flew whistling through the air. That of Jack Roll just grazed my cheek, and buried itself in the ground behind me, while mine took the cap of my antagonist from his head. Our weapons were again received, again was the signal given, and this time Jack Roll's weapon penetrated the fleshy part of my thigh, while mine passed

through his shirt at the side. I felt the blood streaming down my leg as the man drew out the dart, and told them to hurry the next signal, for I felt myself already growing weak from the loss of blood. The weapon was again in my hand, and at the signal I steadied myself as well as I could, and threw the harpoon with all the power and precision I could muster. The sharp dart penetrated the stomach of Jack Roll and came out at the back; while his own weapon, glancing sideways, cut a deep gash in my forehead, which has left its mark to this day. He fell to the earth with a terrific yell, and expired in a few moments, while, unable to support myself longer, I sank into the arms of one of my shipmates, who placed me in the boat.

"I have but little more to say. The captain had me conveyed into the cabin, where I was nursed through all my sufferings by his gentle daughter Annie, who proved herself a perfect angel. I was soon able to move around, and before the voyage was over, Annie and I were pledged to each other. On our return home we were married. Soon after our marriage, I shipped in a gunboat, have been present in several engagements, and am happy to inform you that in a few days I shall wear the uniform of a master's mate.

WHY INDIANS TOOK SCALPS.

The commonly received opinion among white men is that the Indians scalped their enemies to prevent them from making a respectable appearance in the happy hunting grounds.

"How," says one writer, "would a baldheaded Indian look in the spirit land?"

It is true that among all the Indians I have ever met, I never yet saw one with a bald head, but it is an error to believe Indians scalp people to keep them from going to heaven, or the happy hunting grounds, as they call their heaven. The custom of taking scalps grew out of the many large stories Indians told after their return from their war expeditions.

Indians used to sew the scalps they had taken on the front of their lodges, and many of them placed these bloody trophies on poles in front of their wigwams. I was told of an Indian once who had an entire suit made of scalps he had taken, and when he died they buried him in this strange winding sheet. They said he could wear it in the happy hunting grounds. A warrior wearing scalps was a brave man, a chief, and every honor was paid to him by his people. The greater in number his scalps the more was the respect in which he was held by the remainder of the tribe.

Among the Sioux, a woman when she felt bad or had "a bad heart," as they called it, often went with a war party, and if they were successful, they brought her the head of one of their enemies, which she carefully skinned and then mashed the skull with a war club; this always removed her bad heart and made her feel quite cheerful and happy.

Did I ever see a man who had been scalped and who recovered? Yes, once. His name was Thomas Cahone, and he was a conductor on the Union Pacific Railway. One day in April, 1868, as Cahone was running his train near Sidney, Nebraska, while crossing a small stream, he had to halt for some time, and he and a man named

Willis Edmonston got out to fish. They were unarmed, but did not think of danger, although Indians had been coming and going through the country.

They had not been fishing long when a party of mounted Sioux Indians rushed down upon them, although they were in full sight of the town of Sidney. The Indians first attempted to run off a band of horses near by, but in this they failed. They then turned upon the poor fishermen, and, riding up to them, began to fire arrows into their bodies. Edmonston received four arrows, and then died.

Cahone had several arrows shot into him, the Indians riding on close alongside and firing at short range. One arrow pierced Cahone's lungs, and he fell, bleeding profusely. An Indian advanced, dismounted, and took Cahone's scalp proper from the top of his head. Another Indian rode up, and cut a strip about four inches wide and seven inches long from the side of Cahone's head. All this time the man was either unconscious or lay still. The Indians, thinking him dead, did not mutilate his body beyond scalping him.

There was at that time a small detachment of United States troops stationed at Sidney under the command of Lieutenant Bubb, United States army. Seeing the attack from the village, Lieutenant Bubb and his men, reinforced by the citizens, rushed out to the assistance of the men. They found Cahone still living, took him in, and sent him to Omaha, where the arrows were extracted and his wounds dressed. It was not believed he could recover, but he did, and regained excellent health. I often saw him afterward on the Union Pacific Railway, and one day he showed me his head. It was not a pleasant sight, but he said it did not hurt him in the least. He wore a wig, and seldom took off his hat, which entirely covered his wounds. He was a handsome young fellow, and was only twenty-five years old when he was scalped.

Many years ago, when I was at Fort Buford, the Indians at Fort Berthold, just above Buford, had an old Indian who had been scalped by the Sioux. His head was entirely skinned down to the ears. He was kept in a lodge by himself and seldom came out, nor did the Indians like to have any one go and see him. They considered it a great disgrace that one of their tribe should have been scalped. I have been told that the Crows, at one time, had several houses which they called "the scalped men's houses," and in them lived Indians of the Crow tribe who had been scalped in wars with the Sioux.

FISHING WITH WILD HORSES.

Of all the extraordinary modes of taking fish, that which is practiced by the Indians, of Salobo, on the Oronoco, in catching the gymnotus, the most powerful of all the species of electric eels, is, perhaps, the strangest.

As every one knows, the electric eel protects itself and catches its prey by means of an electric discharge, which for the time being benumbs any living organism with which it comes into contact. If the fish is forced to keep these discharges up for any length of time it becomes completely exhausted and helpless, and it is of this fact that the Indians take advantage in hunting the gymnotus with their half-wild horses and mules.

Having found a portion of water along the marshy banks of the river where the eels are congregated, they drive their terrified animals into the water, and then begins

a struggle which most Europeans find a little too much for their nerves the first time they see it.

On the banks and in the shallow water the Indians jump about and howl, brandishing long canes and harpoons, and driving the animals back whenever they attempt to leave the water.

The eels, meanwhile, roused to fury by the disturbance, attack the poor bewildered beasts with repeated discharges of their batteries, until they are nearly mad with fright and pain. Sometimes the horses and mules, and especially the latter, sink under the force of the discharges, and are only with difficulty saved from drowning.

Sometimes in their terror they will attack each other with their teeth, and bite fiercely until the shocks overcome them. Meanwhile the eels, looking like great yellow, livid water serpents, writhe along the surface of the water, chasing their enemies, and by some strange intuition seeking out the most unprotected parts of their bodies on which to deliver their shocks. A single eel has been known to confine its attention to one horse, and, by constantly directing its discharge at the heart, to benumb and drown it within five minutes.

In about a quarter of an hour the struggle is over, and the eels are vanquished. The animals lose their terror, and the fish, instead of attacking as before, now shun the invaders of their territory and make for the banks, where they are easily harpooned, and drawn ashore by means of long lines. They are quite exhausted, and unable to give any shock to speak of, but the natives have such a wholesome dread of them that they will not even now touch them until they are quite sure they are dead.

PAYING HIM BACK.

A Prussian school inspector appeared in the office of the burgomaster of a little town for the purpose of asking him to accompany him on a tour of inspection through the schools. The burgomaster, rather out of sorts, muttered:

"Does this donkey come again?"

The inspector awaited his time for a proper answer, according to the immortal advice, "Vengeance is a dish that must be eaten cool."

When the inspector was introduced to the first teacher, he said he was curious to see how well punctuation was taught. The burgomaster, the local supervisory authority, said:

"Never mind that; we care nought for commas and the like."

But the inspector ordered a boy to go to the board and write, "The burgomaster of R. says, the inspector is a donkey." Then he ordered him to change the comma by placing it after "R.," and insert one after "inspector"; thus—"The burgomaster of R. says the inspector, is a donkey."

BEDROOMS OF THE ORIENT.

The bedrooms of the Orient are far different from those of Christendom. Fully half the women of the world sleep upon the floor or the ground, and even the richest of the ladies of Asia have never known the luxury of hair mattresses and spring beds. Most of these Mongolian beauties don't know what a feather bed means, and there is in most museums a Japanese pillow, consisting of a

piece of wood about the size of a loaf of bread with a piece of soft paper tied on the top of it, and so made that it will just fit into Yum Yum's neck and prop her head off the floor.

The Japanese girl never needs to shake up her pillow, and it is her neck rather than her head that lies upon it. The same kind of pillows are used in China and Siam, and as to the average woman of Hindostan, she does not know what a pillow means. You could buy her whole wardrobe for a dollar, and she sleeps on the floor, while her husband cuddles himself up in spoon fashion on the bed.

The Korean pillow is about eight inches square and a foot long. They are as hard as though they were flat irons wrapped in cloth, and there is nothing comfortable about them. The Egyptians use large pillows, and the beauties of the harems sleep on big divans, which are often covered with Turkish rugs.

The Japanese sleep on the floor. They have thick quilts, which they spread on the floor at night, and which they pack away in cupboards in the daytime, and these constitute the bed. The Burmese also sleep on the floor, but they usually spread down mats instead of quilts, and the pillows are of bamboo. The same discomfort of sleeping arrangements prevails all over the East, and there is not a washstand in any Asiatic bedroom.

EYESIGHT AND THE COLOR OF THE HAIR.

It has been asserted that fair-haired persons have shorter sight than dark-haired, the reason for this belief being given as the number of spectacles worn in Germany, a blond nation. But, on the other hand, blindness reaches its highest European point among the Spaniards, who are conspicuously dark of complexion, and almost its lowest in Sweden. The two extremes of bad sight and good are found in Egypt and the United States, the latter having the lowest ratio of blind population of any country in the world.

WEIGHT OF WRITING.

There is a wonderful piece of mechanism in the United States government mint in the shape of the scales for weighing the gold coin. Two pieces of paper of equal weight have been placed upon the balances, and on one being removed and an autograph in lead pencil inscribed on it, and the sheet replaced on the scales, the second piece has been found to outweigh the other.

A DOG STORY.

A family let their house furnished, leaving in it a large dog. The tenant was an old lady, who liked to sit in a particularly comfortable chair in the drawing-room; but as the dog was also fond of the chair, she frequently found him in possession. Being rather afraid of the dog, she did not dare to drive him out, and therefore used to go to the window and call "Cats!" The dog would then rush to the window and bark, and the lady would take possession of the chair. One day the dog entered and found the lady in possession of the chair. He ran to the window and barked excitedly. The lady got up to see what was the matter, and the dog instantly seated himself in the chair.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Will Cross Ocean in Fourteen-foot Power Boat.

Thomas A. Johansen and Lawrence Erhard, members of the crew of the revenue cutter *Acushnet*, who are to attempt to cross the Atlantic Ocean in a 14-foot open power boat, are busy making their preparations to leave New Bedford, Mass.

The men are carefully planning the voyage, and will supervise the work of renovating the power boat in which they are to attempt the trip across the ocean.

They will add to the long list of New Bedford men, mostly whaling captains, who have attempted and in some cases succeeded in establishing records for long water trips in mere cockleshell boats. The small boat will sail for England by way of Fayal, and if the voyage is successful it will be the smallest boat that has ever crossed the Atlantic.

In 1849, J. Miller Cransten, a whaling captain, built a 47-foot overall schooner and sailed from New Bedford to San Francisco, a distance of 13,000 miles.

Captain Thomas Crape, with his wife, crossed the Atlantic in forty-nine days in 1877 in a 20-foot leg-o'-mutton rigged schooner. He, like Cransten, was a whaling captain before he made the perilous voyage.

Captain Joshua Slocum, of Fairhaven, at one time a whaleman, set out from Boston in 1895 in the little yawl *Spray*, and encircled the globe. He made several shorter trips, and a few years ago sailed from New Bedford, heading south.

Since that day he has never been seen nor heard from, and it is believed he must have been drowned in a storm.

Five years ago Captain Joaquin Reen and Joe Fenecke sailed for Brava in a small sloop. When within sight of the island their craft was wrecked and they were picked up by a steamer.

Leaps, Lands on Thief.

Leaping, thinly clad, from his bedroom window, in the second floor of his home, 253 Bradford Street, Brooklyn, when he detected a horse thief in the act of driving off with his father's brand-new \$500 trotter, William Wachter, 18 years old, landed on the head and shoulders of the thief, knocking him sprawling from the seat of the surrey to which the horse was hitched. Although stunned, the thief ran, the boy in pursuit.

After a chase of three blocks, a crowd following, Wachter and a barbed-wire fence gripped the fugitive as he was leaping the fence at Liberty and Van Sicklen Avenues. Detective Frank Burke, who ran up, got him to the Liberty Avenue police station after a struggle. He denied he was a horse thief; but was held for examination.

Big Increase in Use of Cement.

According to returns received by the United States geological survey up to January 15, 1913, it is estimated by Ernest F. Burchard, of the survey, that the total quantity of Portland cement manufactured in the United States in 1912 was approximately 81,941,998 barrels. It is believed that this estimate is within 1.5 per cent of the exact figure. This quantity represents an increase of 3,413,361 barrels over the 78,528,637 barrels manufactured in 1911,

or 4.3 per cent. The shipments of Portland cement during 1912 are estimated at 84,750,291 barrels, compared with 75,547,829 barrels in 1911, an increase of 9,202,462 barrels, or 12.2 per cent. The production in 1912 was thus held in check sufficiently to permit a material reduction in the stocks of cement at the mills at the close of 1911, which amounted to nearly 12,000,000 barrels.

The continued increase in the production of Portland cement is significant in view of the fluctuations in the output of other leading mineral products such as coal, iron, and copper. The curve of production of Portland cement, although not now rising at so rapid a rate as during 1909 and 1910, is still pointing upward, and has yet to take its first downward drop.

Practically all mills report having to contend with adverse business conditions during the first six months of the year. Prices were lower than the average for 1911 during this period, and some plants reported the lowest prices for which they had ever sold cement. After the middle of the year conditions improved materially and generally during the last four months of 1912 the demand for Portland cement was sufficient to keep most mills running at full capacity. In the Lehigh district production was curtailed slightly in order to diminish accumulated stocks. Production and shipments in New York show the greatest proportionate increase of all districts. In the southeastern States the increase in production and shipments was gratifyingly large, as it was also in the vicinity of Chicago, Ill., and in Iowa and Missouri. Certain plants in Kansas were much hampered by the failure of the supply of natural gas, and were obliged to shut down temporarily while installing coal-burning devices. This feature contributed to the decrease in production in the Great Plains States. In the Pacific coast States and in certain of the Rocky Mountain States production did not keep pace with that of 1911, owing to the lack of demand for cement for large public works.

The average price for the whole country of Portland cement per barrel in bulk at the mills will probably show a slight decrease when complete returns are received, although at the close of the year prices were much better than they had been during the last two years.

Roses Grow on Apple Tree.

A Siberian crab tree of the transcendent variety, bearing large and apparently perfect white roses, has been the object of great curiosity at the John Morris place, at Knoxville, Iowa.

In the matter of size, they run from the diameter of a 25-cent piece to as large as a half dollar. Instead of the single row of open flattened petals, each of the rose blossoms has from three to five rows, all neatly crimped and tucked.

Electricity Restores Life.

After J. L. Mongó, member of a well-known Long Island family, had been pronounced dead by physicians who had worked over him two hours after he had been taken from the water, where he had been for half an hour, heart action was temporarily restored by the application of an

electric current for half an hour. Soon, however, the heart action ceased, and Mongo died. He did not regain consciousness during the electrical treatment.

Cat Leaps from Tall Spire.

While firemen, at Meridian, Miss., were raising a ladder in an effort to rescue a cat which had climbed to the top of the steeple of the Central Methodist Church, 110 feet high, the cat leaped. The fall did not seem to hurt Pussy; she scampered away without even stopping to look at the astonished firemen.

Boy Says He Found \$35,000.

Brayton Gardner, 18 years old, of North Adams, Mass., who has announced that he had found \$35,000 in a leather bag on the tracks of the Boston & Maine Railroad, refused to tell the police where he put the money.

"I have hid it in a good, safe place," said he, "and if some one claims it I'll produce it immediately."

Young Gardner walked into the office of a local newspaper and shoved a slip over to the "classified ad" clerk which read:

"Found—\$35,000. Owner can have money by identifying it and satisfying Brayton Gardner."

He paid for the advertisement and walked out again. Gardner says he found the money in a leather bag on the Boston & Maine tracks.

Snake Shuts Off Town Lights; Dies.

All the electric lights in Mullins, S. C., went out suddenly the other night and stayed out. The next morning linemen found a 20-inch green snake tangled in some wires on a pole. The snake had crawled to the top of the pole, and, coming in contact with the wires, forced a short circuit, put out the lights, and incidentally died.

Calf Has "7" on His Forehead.

A. J. Norwine, of Flat River, Mo., has a calf which has established for him a new brand mark. Norwine never before used the figure "7" for his brand, but when a brown calf entered the world with the figure prominent on its forehead, he adopted the mark.

Norwine, who is a merchant, examined the calf soon after its birth and found that the only marking on the perfectly brown animal was the "7" in white on its forehead.

Birdman's Wild Ride.

After having been a toy of the winds in a rudderless and helpless air craft for six hours, carried to an altitude of 7,000 feet, then dropped into Long Island Sound, George M. Gay, 21 years old, used his last strength in an effort to cling to the runaway dirigible balloon, even though it was forcing him under water and jerking him out again as it flew.

A rowboat and motor boat had gone to Gay's rescue, and he was picked up unhurt, but exhausted. He was still grasping the knife with which he had cut the big bag, forcing it to descend. When he was pulled off the rigging the balloon sailed away toward the sea, and there is no trace of it.

Gay's trip was accidental. He was testing the balloon, a new one, at Palisades Amusement Park, New Jersey, and got into the basket. It was intended to let the balloon, attached to a rope, ascend a short distance. The air craft

was without a rudder or engine. Through a misunderstanding the balloon was released, and before Gay realized what had happened he was soaring more than a thousand feet in the air. Higher and higher the big balloon rose.

Caught in a current of air, the bag, after whirling in a circle, darted suddenly at tremendous speed northeast over Harlem, rising steadily all the time. It turned a complete somersault and swung out over Long Island Sound. The boy aeronaut climbed into the rigging and slit the bag. He took a desperate chance. The balloon might have volplaned into the water at such a rate as to have killed its occupant. However, it fell easily into the Sound, a mile and a half off the shore, startling persons on a steamer and a number of small boats.

"I'm sorry I lost my balloon." That was all the boy could say as he was picked up.

A Leaning Lighthouse.

The Chandeleur Lighthouse, on the Louisiana coast, undermined by one of the terrific hurricanes of the Mexican Gulf and driven many feet out of plumb, is endeavoring to rival the performance of the famous Leaning Tower of Pisa, in Italy. The tower is being swung farther and farther from the perpendicular by the action of tides on the foundations, which rest on nothing more stable than sand.

Despairing of ever restoring the lighthouse to its original upright position, the government has abandoned it and established another elsewhere. Already the strain is beginning to tell, the cracks in the walls are widening, and soon the tower will scatter its stones upon the beach.

Wealthy Boy Would Rather Work.

Despite that his old Columbia University friends, from which institution he so mysteriously disappeared two years ago, have finally found him, and that in the East he might live as luxuriously as any Vanderbilt or Astor with his own fortune of nearly \$2,000,000 and that which he will inherit, which is about five times more, John O'Brien says that nothing can induce him to give up his present occupation as section boss on the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Furthermore, this job obliges him to be at work at 7 in the morning in all kinds of weather and at times entails the use of a shack for a home with a rough pine board bunk for a bedstead and coarse camp-fire food for diet.

O'Brien left Columbia without a word of explanation to his chums shortly before examination time in 1911. He was supposed to be on his way to spend a week-end at a seashore resort where, however, he never appeared. For a time there was great excitement among Columbia students, and a hunt was kept up for months.

All the time, O'Brien now says, his mother knew his whereabouts, but if she did so she did not convey the information to his friends. Then came letters from O'Brien from the West, in which he settled up some small debts he had left at Columbia. Then he sent a check to his fraternity to help out in the commencement celebrations, and ceremonies. It was through these letters that he was finally traced to Van Buren, Ark.

He is now twenty-six, and has broadened and toughened since his college days.

"I just grew tired of being a millionaire," he told a reporter, "tired of having nothing to do but to play the society game. I wanted to be a real man and get in a real game. I am doing useful work, and am proud of myself

for the first time in my life. Whenever I feel that I have qualified properly in the world of men I will return home, assume my wealth, and try to use it for good purposes. That's all there is to it. I came out here not playing the "rich-kid" stuff—just offering my services for what I was worth. I worked hard, and promotion came promptly, and I am honestly delighted with my tasks."

57,628,491 Beasts Killed.

Reports to the department of agriculture show that in the fiscal year ended June 30 last there were 57,628,491 animals slaughtered under Federal inspection in the 790 slaughtering establishments in 225 cities and towns of the United States. This is an increase of nearly 5,000,000 over the number of animals slaughtered in the previous fiscal year. Of the animals inspected by government officials in the last fiscal year, there were 7,245,585 cattle, 2,277,954 calves, 14,979,354 sheep, 72,871 goats, and 33,052,727 hogs. Slaughtering establishments and meat-food factories increased from 919 to 940 in the fiscal year.

Chicago, with 12,910,506 animals slaughtered under Federal inspection by the department of agriculture, leads in numbers. The other principal points of Federally inspected slaughter are in the following order:

Kansas City, 5,645,161; South Omaha, 4,600,655; New York, 3,034,685; National stockyards (East St. Louis), 2,966,292; South St. Joseph, 2,671,443; Boston, 1,826,044; Indianapolis, 1,598,503; Sioux City, 1,520,607; Buffalo, 1,381,271.

The total condemnations at the time of slaughter for disease or other causes numbered 262,687 whole carcasses and 494,328 parts of other carcasses, or a total of 727,015 condemnations. In addition, nearly 18,000,000 pounds of prepared meats and meat products were condemned on re-inspection because they had become unwholesome subsequent to the first inspection.

Many Want to be Birdmen.

Despite the long list of army aviation fatalities, many young officers have filed applications for the vacancy caused by the death of Lieutenant Loren H. Call. He was the tenth victim claimed by aviation in the army and navy.

Call met disaster in a flight in Texas. He went up in his aeroplane from the field in the Second Army division camp, at Texas City. A "warm-air" current is believed to have caused the accident, when Call was 500 feet in the air, a few miles from the spot where he had started. The unfortunate officer fought every foot of the fatal drop, first to right the machine, and then to save himself.

Lieutenant Call was the first army aviator to fly the new army hydroaeroplane, the most powerful one ever constructed.

Scatter Man's Ashes from Building He Helped Erect.

The ashes of Jacob Gross, who was 65 years old and a steel worker, have been cast over the edge of the new Union Central Life Insurance building, in Cincinnati, Ohio, to fulfill the dying wish of the man.

The wind whistled around the tops of the twenty-four story building and carried the particles over the surrounding housetops and down into the streets far below, scattering them over the sidewalks like snowflakes, so that the people looked up and wondered why the plasterers up there finishing the structure were not more careful.

And that was all of the funeral of Jacob Gross. The

"funeral" was in charge of Gross' attorney, Nicholas Klein, to whom Gross imparted his desire for "total physical elimination after death." It was his wish that his ashes be taken to the top of the highest building in Cincinnati which he had helped erect, and that they be cast to the four winds.

The odd ceremony was witnessed by workmen up there who stopped long enough to see the can filled with the white ashes tipped and the winds do the rest.

"Gentlemen," said Attorney Klein, "you have witnessed the last rites of one of your fellow men—one of the great army of soldiers of industry. He fell in battle. Personally I do not approve of this method of disposal. But I have carried out his dying wish."

And hundreds, rushing past the building, stepped over some small gristly substance and ground it fine.

Boy Firebug Wanted to be "Hero."

Desire to be a hero and his fascination for observing firemen at work was the reason for his starting numerous fires on the North Side, Pittsburgh, Pa., given in the confession of Raymond Raab, aged 15, under arrest, charged with arson. Young Raab enumerates the fires he started, one of them being the Library office building, which was destroyed with a loss of two lives and \$50,000 last December.

Raab had been suspected for some time, as it was observed he was often among the first on the scene of a fire when an alarm was sent in. He was arrested, and under severe questioning confessed.

He started four fires in one week, according to his confession. While employed in a store for one day he tried to destroy it twice. He wanted to "see the firemen," he said. On Monday he fired mattresses and paper in a large furniture house, causing a \$2,700 loss. On Tuesday he obtained employment as elevator boy in an apartment house, and had been at work but a few hours when he threw a lighted match into a box of waste paper in the basement and then turned in an alarm. His latest attempt was Wednesday, in the same apartment house he tried to destroy Tuesday. He ran the car to the sixth story, placed paper in the shaft on the greased upright guides of the shaft, and, after lighting these, called the fire department by telephone.

Saves Boys from Lynching.

Two boys, Bennie Franklin and Tommy Barnes, of Moberly, Mo., were overtaken by Sheriff Magruder, at Armstrong, ten miles south of Huntsville, Mo., with two ponies stolen from M. O. Embree, of Moberly. Returning to the county jail they were overtaken by a mob near Roanoke, who demanded the prisoners that they might hang them.

The sheriff saved the boys by fast driving. They were arraigned and placed under \$2,000 bond until the September term of court.

Uses Syringe to Transfuse Blood.

A new method of blood transfusion was resorted to in the Northwestern General Hospital, at Philadelphia, Pa., recently, when in transferring six ounces of blood from the veins of a young husband to those of his sick wife, a specially constructed syringe was used to convey the fluid, instead of bringing the veins of the giver and the receiver together.

Doctor J. Thompson Schell, the chief surgeon, who

performed the operation, explained that the new method has the advantage of measuring the exact amount of blood taken. He stated that the greatest care must be taken to prevent the coagulation of the blood and to prevent air from entering the patient's veins.

Both of the patients quickly rallied after the operation, and the young wife's condition is said to be much improved.

The syringe used by Doctor Schell is about 15 inches long and an inch in diameter. Sterile paraffin was melted in the interior to prevent the blood coming into contact with the glass.

Lives to 102 on Strict Diet.

William C. Simpson, 102 years old, the oldest inmate of the Federal soldiers' home, at St. James, Mo., and a survivor of the Mexican War, attributes his longevity to a strict diet of bacon and corn bread. He never married. When in his home town of Little York, Pa., his bride-to-be died.

Use Milk to Save House from Fire.

When David M. Epler and his family emerged from their home at Middletown, Pa., after a thunder shower, they discovered that lightning had struck the house, and the roof was afire. A ladder was hastily obtained, and without taking time to pump water, Epler and one of his neighbors, who had sought refuge in the house, took several buckets of milk from the porch and extinguished the fire before it had gained much headway.

Sees "Wild West" in Florida Courtroom.

Jim Larkin, deputy sheriff, lives in "wild" Butte in the "woolly West," but he had to go to Florida to see some real woolly stunts pulled off. While in Tampa, waiting for papers with which to return a prisoner to Butte, Larkin visited the county courtroom where there was in progress the trial of a man named Maddox on a charge of assault. It was disclosed that the wife of the prisoner had spirited away the complainant in the case, and the defendant was about to be acquitted when an uncle of the complainant entered the courtroom, gun in hand. As he stepped into the room, just in front of the deputy from Butte, he began to shoot. Three shots were fired at the prisoner, but none took effect, though the third went pretty close to the judge on the bench and splintered his desk. Another shot went into the ceiling and the third punctured a law book on a table in front of the prisoner's counsel. When the shooting began, the defendant and his attorney ducked under the table, and the judge took refuge behind a safe door. Then the big deputy from Butte unlimbered himself and pinned the gunman's arms to his side.

After a while the officers of the court took the man into custody.

Feared Being Buried Alive.

Mrs. Adelaide Sherwood Soule, the late widow of Professor Frank Soule, of the University of California faculty, had a mortal terror of being buried alive, and in her will, which has been filed for probate, she stipulated that within twenty-four hours from the time of her death her heart should be cut out, and that her body should be held for burial seven days.

Mrs. Soule was fond of animals. She provided in her will that within twenty-four hours from the time of her

death all of her pets should be chloroformed, and then held under water for twenty-four hours.

Mrs. Sarah Manchester, administratrix, had the dead woman's heart removed and the body held for seven days. The pets all were killed as directed.

Seeks Cell in Remorse.

Stolen money—\$5,175—from the funds of the American Express Company lay in the pockets of Alexander S. Woods, East St. Louis agent for the company, as he wandered through the streets of Philadelphia at three o'clock one morning recently, fighting his conscience. It was just that hour when Woods stood beneath the arc light at Fifteenth and Market Streets, watching Sergeant Daly and two patrolmen wrestling with a drunkard.

He fumbled the greenbacks in his pockets, crossed the street, and accosted the sergeant as the patrol wagon clanged at the curb.

"Sergeant, would you mind sending me along with him?" Woods asked, indicating the staggering man.

"Why?"

"Because I'm a thief."

"How's that?"

"I'm wanted by the American Express Company in East St. Louis for stealing five thousand and one hundred and seventy-five dollars. I've stood it as long as I can. Here's the stuff." Woods pulled a handful of money from his pocket and handed it to Sergeant Daly. "I want you to send me back to St. Louis. I want to face the music," he explained. "I want my two little girls to know that even if I have made a big mistake I have done all I could to make it good."

Sergeant Daly motioned toward the patrol wagon.

"Jump in," he said.

Woods obeyed and a few minutes later he was in a cell.

Traihman Saves Two from Death.

Trapped on a motor cycle on which they were riding tandem in front of a freight train on the E., J. & E. Railroad, in Hammond, Ind., John McLane and Edward Zitz owe their lives to Patrick Connell, a switchman, who was on the running board of the engine.

Connell, with amazing presence of mind, knew he could not drag both men on the engine, so he knocked Zitz off the motor cycle to the right of way, and seized McLane by the collar and dragged him on the engine as it passed over the motor cycle.

Unknown People Traced in Mound.

A remarkable archaeological discovery was recently made near Howe, Neb., when archaeologists working in what is said to be the largest mound in the State found therein a stone cairn engraved with strange characters and containing human bones of such great age that even the teeth crumbled to dust when exposed to the open air.

Scientists connected with the University of Nebraska have signified their intention of sending field men to conduct a thorough examination and make further excavations in the giant mound in the belief that other rare discoveries may be made therein.

The pictographs are all on one stone, which is of hard granite, of which not an ounce is found native in the State. There are eleven characters engraved on the stone, which is thirty-nine inches long, from twelve to eighteen

inches wide, and about three inches thick. The slab shows no indications of ever having been shaped by human hands, but is just as it came from strata somewhere near the mountains.

The characters themselves are cut half an inch deep in the hard surface, but there are no signs of the implement with which the engraving was done. Both flat sides of the stone are covered with the inscriptions, which, according to Doctor R. F. Gilder, field archaeologist of the Nebraska University, bear no resemblance to any known picture writings that have ever come to his notice.

For years the huge mound has been a landmark in southern Nebraska. It is more than one hundred feet in diameter, and in the days of '49 was used as a guide by thousands of prairie schooners bound to the gold fields.

Six feet beneath the stone cairn were found a few fragmentary human bones, and the burned earth and discolored stones all bear evidence to the fact that they had been subjected to intense heat at the time of interment.

Further excavations show that the burial vault was hollowed out of the earth to a depth of about three feet, and into this the body was placed. Then the tons of rock were arched over the top with the vertical marker directly in the center. The pictographs are engraved on this central marker.

In the big mound not a single piece of pottery nor a weapon of any kind has come to light, although the archaeologists doing the work have sifted all dirt removed from the cairn.

From this fact, as well as from the discovery of the pictographs and the stone cairn, Nebraska archaeologists assert the people who built this particular mound were of a different nation than were the builders of the ordinary mounds in the Missouri River Valley.

Photographs of the engraved characters are to be made and sent to every big museum, as well as to all prominent archaeologists in the country in an effort at deciphering them or in determining if similar pictographs have ever been discovered in any other portion of the United States.

Calf Has no Eyes, no Tail.

D. Florea, a farmer living near Hopkins, Mo., is the owner of a calf that has neither eyes nor tail. There are dents in its head where the eyes should be, but no eyes. The calf is six months old, and has been fed by hand. It is very healthy, and is full of play, but instead of running, as the other calves do, it jumps up and down, hardly moving out of its tracks.

Sight Restored After Fifty Years.

Fifty years ago a little girl was struck blind. She was 16 years old then, and had never seen the man whom she later married, in her home at Hillsdale, Mich. She became the mother of eight children. The husband became an invalid and died, leaving the blind woman to support her children, which she did by working as a laundress. Years went by, and the children, now men and women, went out into the world. Their mother had never seen their faces.

"But every night I taught them to pray: 'God give mother back her sight before she dies,'" she said recently, "and their prayers have been answered."

The woman, now bent and feeble, is Mrs. Mary Welsh. She left Chicago for her Hillsdale home, her sight restored. Mrs. Welsh during the last month has been in

the Wesley Hospital, Chicago. The operation that gave back her sight, surgeons say, was one of the most remarkable on record. It consisted in the removal of a cataract of 50 years' standing that had settled over the eyeball.

The Methodist Congregation at Hillsdale took up a collection to pay the expenses of the trip to Chicago.

Mrs. Welsh came to the hospital from her home at once. On her breast she bore the inscription, "I am blind. I am going to the Wesley Hospital, please direct me," on a large placard.

Successful Fly Trap.

At the street corners in Redlands, Cal., there has been placed a curious object which, on close inspection proves to be a screened frame, twelve inches square and over two feet high, about the size of a big wastebasket. It is a fly "cage." The bottom sets about two inches from the ground.

In this bottom is a cone-shaped screen with the large opening down. Under this is placed a banana peel or other fly delicacy. Investigation shows that the pests go under the screen, and, the light being above, fly up into the cone and thence through the small hole into the cage.

Naturally, it would take a rather smart fly to find that little hole again and get out. Flies instinctively fly up and toward the light. So the cage, with no effort whatever, catches flies by the thousands.

It is so complete that the duties of the municipal fly catcher consists simply in daily baiting the traps, collecting the flies, and burning them. According to his report, filed at the end of the month, 3,750,000 flies were thus killed.

Stuck in Bog, Goes Mad.

Eighteen long and terrible hours of suffering while enmeshed in a deep bog on an island in Red River, near Shreveport, La., has caused Charles Lee, an old negro, to turn completely insane. He started to wade to the island, and soon became bogged, sinking up to his hips in the sand, which formed a crust about his limbs, preventing him from freeing himself and causing him to remain there all night and half a day. A white man passing next morning in a skiff discovered the old man, and several helpers were required to extricate him.

Imprisons Woman for Ducking Man.

For pushing John George Agar into the Grand Surrey Canal, at London, England, recently, Mary Ann Buckland, thirty-six years old, an artificial flower maker, has been sentenced at Lambeth to two months' imprisonment.

Agar said that he was giving his dog a swim when he was pushed from behind into the water. "You were swimming your dog," said the woman, "and I thought I would make you have a swim as well."

Snuff Use Increases.

Snuff using is on the increase. Old-fashioned dipping is probably once more coming into vogue, and it is not merely among the poor whites of the mountains and the black mammys of antebellum distinction.

Black mammys and hillmen, no matter if every one in the South kept a quid of the weed nicotinia in her or his mouth from noon to noon, could never be responsible for the \$113,692.76 revenue which came into the Nashville internal revenue office during May for the sale of snuff

stamps. Snuff stamps sales totaled more than half the entire income of the office during the month previous, the total of all revenue for the month being \$209,470.76.

For the eleven months just ended the collector has received \$1,288,026.96 for the sale of snuff stamps to be slapped on the boxes of weed powder. The total revenue for the eleven months was \$2,049,417.64, showing what a large per cent snuff revenue forms.

Who uses all this snuff? This is a problem for the social worker, the working out of which would probably lead to some startling discoveries.

Big Shark Kills Life-saver.

A story of a heroic ship stoker, who, in going to the rescue of a comrade, was torn to pieces by sharks, was told by firemen who arrived recently at New York on the fruit steamer *Pastores*.

While the *Pastores* was at anchor in the bay at Port Limon, Karl Shafer, a fireman, and August Schulke, a trimmer, went for a swim. Shafer swam for a good distance and was seized with cramps. He yelled to Schulke at the same time that Schulke saw the black fin of a big shark bob out of the ocean.

Schulke, without hesitation, started to aid Shafer. He turned on his back, and was towing Shafer toward shore when the shark rushed at the two men and both were lost.

Farmer Battles With Rats Attacking Horse.

Levi Lytle, of Kerby, Mich., had an encounter the other night with half a dozen rats that had attacked his horse. Attracted to the barn by the pounding of the horse, Lytle found the rats lacerating the frantic animal's legs with their sharp teeth, causing injuries that may cripple the horse permanently.

When Lytle attacked the rats with a stick they turned on him, and one of the rodents scrambled up his legs and fastened its teeth above the knee, while the others bit at the farmer's ankles.

Lytle finally managed to kill two rats and rout the others.

Ant Pest Creeps Through Country.

Creeping northward out of New Orleans, La., comes the Argentina ant. Government experts are planning a war upon the insect to keep it from covering the country.

The Argentina ant is an undesirable. Its offenses are so many that they outweigh its one virtue, which is that when it goes into a house the bedbugs go out. Even this one virtue may be regarded as doubtful, when it is known that the Argentina ant will bite a human being and will make its bite peculiarly effective and painful if it can reach a tender spot, such as the space between the fingers at

the point of the intersection with the palm. It is known to have killed many forms of vegetation. And as a household pest it stands in a class by itself. Nothing to compare with it as a nuisance has ever been discovered.

It eats whatever man eats. It penetrates ice boxes, bread boxes, paper parcels, and even glass fruit jars if the housewife forgets to put on the rubber gasket before she screws the cover down. In houses infested with it there is no sleep unless the legs of the beds are wound with tape poisoned with something that will affect and stop this ant; and only certain poisons will do that. Beds too secure must be pulled out from the walls so that no part of bed or bedding touches the wall. And the person before retiring must stand upon an insulated chair and make certain he is not taking any of the ants to bed with him. Let the baby but kick the corner of a sheet against the wall, and in a few minutes the screaming infant has to be snatched from its crib, disrobed, and immersed in water to make certain that all the ants are removed.

In such a house the use of poisons and repellents must be continuous. A little carelessness and the foodstuff of the household are filled with countless numbers of the ants in a short time. If one finds a way to get into sugar, fruits, meats, lard, olive oil, cream, butter, eggs raw or cooked, fish, corn meal, and even wheat flour he does not keep the secret to himself. The ant scout informs the tribe and they all come.

The Argentina ant was first noticed in New Orleans twenty years ago. It must have been brought there with the cargo of some ship. At that time it was not known outside of the city. But now it has penetrated the interior of the country, has densely infested the southern half of Louisiana and is steadily moving north.

Blade in His Cheek Thirty-one Years.

Thirty-one years ago Ora Figgins, of Republic, Kan., was helping cut bands for a threshing machine, when the platform on which he was standing collapsed, throwing him on his face. The knife he was using was broken so splinters; one piece of it being found later in the tongue of the machine. When he awoke blood was flowing from a sight wound in his cheek.

Figgins had forgotten all about the incident until a tumorous growth began appearing on his face several months ago. He went north for an operation, and when it was performed a piece of the knife blade, three-fourths of an inch long, was removed.

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